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Nationalism

UTOPIA
DYSTOPIA

Memory

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Catastrophe

Cosmopolitism

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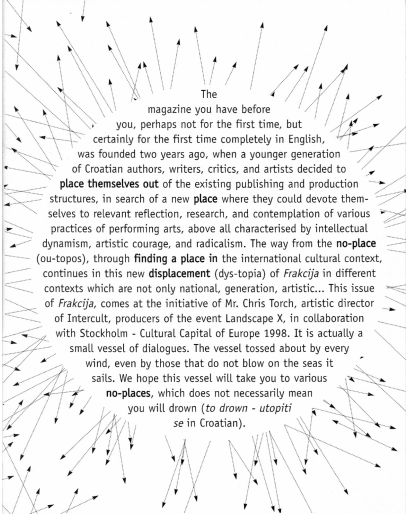
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The magazine you have before you, perhaps not for the first time, but certainly for the first time completely in English, was founded two years ago, when a younger generation of Croatian authors, writers, critics, and artists decided to **place themselves out** of the existing publishing and production structures, in search of a new **place** where they could devote themselves to relevant reflection, research, and contemplation of various practices of performing arts, above all characterised by intellectual dynamism, artistic courage, and radicalism. The way from the **no-place** (ou-topos), through **finding a place** in the international cultural context, continues in this new **displacement** (dys-topia) of *Frakcija* in different contexts which are not only national, generation, artistic... This issue of *Frakcija*, comes at the initiative of Mr. Chris Torch, artistic director of Intercult, producers of the event Landscape X, in collaboration with Stockholm - Cultural Capital of Europe 1998. It is actually a small vessel of dialogues. The vessel tossed about by every wind, even by those that do not blow on the seas it sails. We hope this vessel will take you to various **no-places**, which does not necessarily mean you will drown (to drown - *utopiti* se in Croatian).

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Nova Atlantis

Francis Bacon

We came at our day and hour, and I was chosen by my fellows for the private access. We found him in a fair chamber, richly hang'd, and carpeted under foot, without any degrees to the state; he was set upon a low throne richly adorned, and a rich cloth of state over his head of blue satin embroidered. He was alone, save that he had two pages of honor, on either hand one, finely attired in white. His under-garments were the like that we saw him wear in the chariot; but instead of his gown, he had on him a mantle with a cape, of the same fine black, fastened about him. When we came in, as we were taught, we bowed low at our first entrance; and when we were come near his chair, he stood up, holding forth his hand ungloved, and in posture of blessing; and we every one of us stooped down and kissed the end of his tippet. That done, the rest departed, and I remained. Then he warded the pages forth of the room, and caused me to sit down

beside him, and spake to me thus in the Spanish tongue:

"God bless thee, my son; I will give thee the greatest jewel I have. For I will impart unto thee, for the love of God and men, a relation of the true state of Salomon's House. Son, to make you know the true state of Salomon's House, I will keep this order. First, I will set forth unto you the end of our foundation. Secondly, the preparations and instruments we have for our works. Thirdly, the several employments and functions whereto our fellows are assigned. And fourthly, the ordinances and rites which we observe.

The end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible.

The preparations and instruments are these: We have large and deep caves of several

depths: the deepest are sunk 600 fathoms; and some of them are digged and made under great hills and mountains; so that if you reckon together the depth of the hill and the depth of the cave, they are, some of them, above three miles deep. For we find that the depth of a hill and the depth of a cave from the flat are the same thing; both remote alike from the sun and heaven's beams, and from the open air. These caves we call the lower region. And we use them for all coagulations, infusions, refrigerations, and conservations of bodies. We use them likewise for the imitation of natural mines and the producing also of new artificial metals, by compositions and materials which we use and lay there for many years. We use them also sometimes (which may seem strange) for curing of some diseases, and for prolongation of life, in some hermits that choose to live there, well accommodated of all things necessary, and indeed live very long, by whom also we learn many things.

We have burials in several earths, where we put divers contents, as the Chinese do their porcelains. But we have there is greater variety, and some of them more fire. We also have great variety of composts and soils, for the making of the earth fruitful.

We have high towers, the highest about half a mile in height, and some of them likewise set upon high mountains, so that the vantage of the hill with the tower is in the highest of them three miles at least. And these places we call the upper region, account the air between the high places and the low as a middle region.

We have great lakes, both salt and fresh, whereto we have use for the fish and fowl. We use them also for burials of some natural bodies, for we find a difference in things buried in earth, or in air below the earth, and things buried in water. We have also pools, of which some do strain fresh water out of salt, and others by art do turn fresh water into salt. We have also some rocks in the midst of the sea, and some lays upon the shore for some works, wherein are required the air and vapor of the sea. We have likewise violent streams and cataracts, which serve us for many motions; and likewise engines for multiplying and enforcing of winds to set also on divers motions.

We have also a number of artificial wells and fountains, made in imitation of the natural sources and fountains, as thined upon vitriol, sulphur, steel, brass, lead, nitre, and other minerals; and again, we have little wells for infusions of many things, where the waters take the virtue quicker and better than in

vessels or basins. And among them we have a water, which we call water of paradise, being by that we do it made very sovereign for health and prolongation of life.

We have also great and spacious houses, where we imitate and demonstrate motions — as snow, hail, rain, some artificial rains of bodies and not of water, thunders, lightnings, also generations of bodies in air — as frogs, flies, and divers others.

We have also certain chambers, which we call chambers of health, where we qualify the air as we think good and proper for the cure of divers diseases and preservation of health.

We have also fair and large baths, of several mixtures, for the cure of diseases, and the restoring of man's body from infirmity; and others for the confirming of it in strength of sinews, vital parts, and the very juices and substance of the body.

We have also large and various orchards and gardens, wherein we do not so much respect beauty as variety of ground and soil, proper for divers trees and herbs, and some very spacious, where trees and berries are set, whereto we make divers kinds of drinks, beside the vineyards. In these we practice likewise all conclusions of grafting, and inoculating, as well of wild-trees as fruit-trees, which produceth many effects. And we make by art, in the same orchards and gardens, trees and flowers, to come earlier or later than their seasons, and to come up and bear more speedily than by their natural course they do. We make them also by art greater much than their nature; and their fruit greater and sweeter, and of differing taste, smell, color, and figure, from their nature. And many of them we so order as that they become of medicinal use.

We have also means to make divers plants rise by mixtures of earths without seeds, and likewise to make divers new plants, differing from the vulgar, and to make one tree or plant turn into another.

We have also parks, and enclosures of all sorts, of beasts and birds; which we use not only for view or recreation, but likewise for dissections and trials, that thereby may take light what may be wrought upon the body of man. Whereto we find many strange effects: as continuing life in them, though divers parts, which you account vital, be perished and taken forth; resuscitating of some that seem dead in appearance, and the like. We try also all poisons, and other medicines upon them, as well of chyrurgery as physic.



By art likewise we make them greater or smaller than their kind is, and contrariwise dwarf them and stay their growth; we make them more fruitful and bearing than their kind is, and contrariwise barren and not generative. Also we make them differ in color, shape, activity, many ways. We find means to make constitutions and copulations of divers kinds, which have produced many new kinds, and them not barren, as the general opinion is. We make a number of kinds of serpents, worms, flies, fishes of putrefaction, whereof some are advanced (in effect) to be perfect creatures, like beasts or birds, and have sexes, and do propagate. Neither do we this by chance, but we know beforehand of what matter and constitutions, what kind of those creatures will arise.

We have also particular pools where we make trials upon fishes, as we have said before of beasts and birds.

We have also places for breed and generation of these kinds of worms and flies which are of special use; such as are with you your silkworms and bees.

I will not hold you long with recounting of our hrow-houses, bake-houses, and kitchens, where are made divers drinks, breads, and meats, rare and of special effects. Wines we have of grapes, and drinks of other jules, of fruits, of grains, and of roots, and of mixtures with honey, sugar, manna, and fruits dried and decocted; also of the tears or wounding of trees and of the pulp of canes. And these drinks are of several ages, some to the age or last of forty years. We have drinks also brewed with several herbs and roots and spices; yea, with several fishes and white meats, whereof some of the drinks are such as they are in effect meat and drink both, so that divers, especially in age, do desire to live with them with little or no meat or bread. And above all we strive to have drinks of extreme thin parts, to insinuate into the body, and yet without all biting, sharpness, or frosting; inasmuch as some of them put upon the back of your hand, will with a little stay pass through to the palm, and yet more mild to the mouth. We have also waters, which we ripen in that fashion, as they become nourishing, so that they are indeed excellent drinks, and many will use no other. Bread we have of several grains, roots, and kernels; yea, and some of flesh, and fish, dried, with divers kinds of leavens and seasonings; so that some do extremely move appetites, some do nourish so as divers do live of them, without any other meat, who live very long. So for meats, we have some of them so beaten, and made tender, and moistened, yet without all corrupting, as a weak

heart of the stomach will turn them into good chilis, as well as a strong heat would meat otherwise prepared. We have some meats also and bread, and drinks, which, taken by men, enable them to fast long after, and some other, that used make the very flesh of men's bodies sensibly more hard and tough, and their strength far greater than otherwise it would be.

We have dispensaries or shops of medicines: wherein you may easily think, if we have such variety of plants, and living creatures, more than you have in Europe (for we know what you have), the simples, drugs, and ingredients of medicines, must likewise be in so much the greater variety. We have them likewise of divers ages, and long fermentations. And for their preparations, we have not only all manner of exquisite distillations, and separations, and especially by gentle heats, and percolations through divers strainers, yea, and substances; but also exact forms of composition, whereby they incorporate almost as they were natural simples.

We have also divers mechanical arts, which you have not; and stuffs made by them, as papers, linen, silks, tissues, dainty works of feathers of wonderful luster, excellent dyes, and many others, and shops likewise as well for such as are not brought into vulgar use among us, as for those that are. For you must know, that of the things before recited, many of them are grown into use throughout the kingdom, but yet, if they did flow from our invention, we have of them also for patterns and principles.

We have also furnaces of great diversities, and that keep great diversity of heats: fierce and quick, strong and constant, soft and mild, known, quiet, dry, moist, and the like. But above all we have heats, in imitation of the sun's and heavenly bodies' heats, that pass divers inequalities, and as it were orbs, progresses, and returns whereby we produce admirable effects. Besides, we have heats of dungs, and of bellies and maws of living creatures and of their bloods and bodies, and of hays and herbs laid up moist, of lime unquenched, and such like. Instruments also which generate heat only by motion. And farther, places for strong insulations; and, again, places under the earth, which by nature or art yield heat. These divers heats we use as the nature of the operation which we intend requireth.

We have also perspective houses, where we make demonstrations of all lights and radiations and of all colors; and out of things uncolored and transparent we can represent

unto you all several colors, not in rainbows, as it is in gems and prisms, but of themselves single. We represent also all multiplications of light, which we carry to great distance, and make so sharp as to discern small points and lines. Also all colorations of light: all delusions and deceptions of the sight, in figures, magnitudes, motions, colors; all demonstrations of shadows. We find also divers means, yet unknown to you, of producing light, originally from divers bodies. We procure means of seeing objects afar off, as in the heaven and remote places; and represent things near as afar off, and things afar off as near; making feigned distances. We have also helps for the sight far above spectacles and glasses in use; we have also glasses and means to see small and minute bodies, perfectly and distinctly, as the shapes and colors of small flies and worms, grains, and flaws in gems which cannot otherwise be seen, observations in urine and blood not otherwise to be seen. We make artificial rainbows, hales, and circles about light. We represent also all manner of reflections, refractions, and multiplications of visual beams of objects.

We have also precious stones, of all kinds, many of them of great beauty and to you unknown, crystals likewise, and glasses of divers kind; and among them some of metals vitrified, and other materials, besides those of which you make glass. Also a number of fossils and imperfect minerals, which you have not, likewise loudnesses of prodigious virtue, and other rare stones, both natural and artificial.

We have also sound-houses, where we practise and demonstrate all sounds and their generation. We have harmony which you have not, of quaver-sounds and lesser slides of sounds. Divers instruments of music likewise to you unknown, some sweeter than any you have; with bells and rings that are dainty and sweet. We represent small sounds as great and deep, likewise great sounds extenuate and sharp; we make divers tremblings and warblings of sounds, which in their original are entire. We represent and imitate all articulate sounds and letters, and the voices and notes of beasts and birds. We have certain helps which, set to the ear, do farther the hearing greatly; we have also divers strange and artificial echoes, reflecting the voice many times, and, as it were, tossing it; and some then give back the voice louder than it came, some shriller and some deeper; yea, some rendering the voice, differing in the letters or articulate sound from that they receive. We have all means to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange tones and distances.

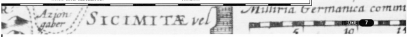
We have also perfume-houses, wherewith we join also practices of taste. We multiply smells which may seem strange; we imitate smells, making all smells to breathe out of other substances than those that give them. We make divers imitations of taste likewise, so that they will deceive any man's taste. And in this house we contain also a varietie-house, where we make all sweetmeats, dry and moist, and divers pleasant wines, milks, broths, and salads, far in greater variety than you have.

We have also engine-houses, where are prepared engines and instruments for all sorts of motions. These we imitate and practise to make rather motions than any you have, either out of your muskets or any engine that you have; and to make them and multiply them more easily and with small force, by wheels and other means, and to make them stronger and more violent than yours are, exceeding your greatest cannons and basilisks. We represent also ordnance and instruments of war and engines of all kinds, and likewise new mixtures and compositions of gunpowder, wild-fires burning in water and unsquenchable, also fire-works of all variety, both for pleasure and use. We imitate also flights of birds; we have some degrees of flying in the air. We have ships and boats for going under water and brooking of seas, also swimming-girdles and supporters. We have divers curious clocks and other like motions of return, and some perpetual motions. We imitate also motions of living creatures by images of men, beasts, birds, fishes, and serpents; we have also a great number of other various motions, strange for equality, fineness, and subtilty.

We have also a mathematical-house, where are represented all instruments, as well of geometry as astronomy, exquisitely made.

We have also houses of deceits of the senses, where we represent all manner of feints of juggling, false apparitions, impostures and illusions, and their fallacies. And surely you will easily believe that we, that have so many things truly natural which induce admiration, could in a world of particulars deceive the senses if we would disguise those things, and labor to make them more miraculous. But we do hate all impostures and lies, inasmuch as we have severely forbidden it to all our fellows, under pain of ignominy and fines, that they do not show any natural work or thing adorned or swelling, but only pure as it is, and without all affection of strangeness.

These are, my son, the riches of Salomon's House."



***"Something
struggling
to be born..."***



GORAN STEFANOVSKI: Let's
start with first things first.
What is utopia?

**A conversation with
HELMUT SCHÄFER
and
CHRIS TORCH**

**written down
and edited by
Goran Stefanovski**

CHRIS TORCH: I have two personal experiences of utopia. One was seeing a movie of the performance "Paradise Now" by the Living Theatre. It must have been in 1970 or '71. I remember watching this incredible situation of 4000 people who'd decided together in a theatrical and organised way to break all the rules. It wasn't the actors on the stage who were playing out utopia, they simply created a utopian situation, together with the movement at that time, at the end of the sixties. And seeing that movie in Boston, Massachusetts one night, transformed me. I never saw the Living Theatre do another "utopian" play. After that they did rather dark plays. But that was for me a moment when human possibility was unimaginably great.

My second experience with utopia, is a very practical story, was when I came to Sweden in 1976. I arrived to a country where everyone was eating and had a roof over their heads, they had clothing and everyone was working on developing intellectually. People were reading books, watching TV without commercials, exploring music and their own cultures. There was money galore for education, research, hospital care, finding new ways to deal with aging. And I thought this was paradise on earth. I didn't have to go around with bad conscience. My personal utopia at that time was being without a guilty conscience.

Dystopia is seeing all that de-constructed. Today in Sweden we experience a slow de-struction of certain ideals. The social democratic welfare state has become, if not dystopia, then certainly a lost utopia. Losing utopia is a very dynamic thing. Like falling out of love. You wake up and open your eyes to new possibilities.

GÖRAN: Helmut, what about your explanation of utopia/dystopia. For beginners?

HELMUT SCHÄFER:

I think my first contact with Utopia was when I was in the body of my mother, hoping to be born. I cannot precisely remember, but I have an idea of what it must have been like. Utopia always has a connection to being born. Always something inside which is closed. Maybe it's a prison, but not necessarily. In every case, there is something that wants to get out. Like being in a country for fifteen years, and you think you're living in a special place, a town or a village, but then suddenly you just have the urge to leave. No start having utopian thoughts. It's something that moves you.

The second aspect that Chris mentioned, about the Swedish welfare state which turned into an "ugly wife" - we have to look at the reasons why it happened. I think it was because of the larger context of world economy which increasingly divides poor and rich. The rich population becomes smaller and smaller.

357 people own two thirds of all of the wealth. It becomes obvious why the Swedish and the German welfare states turned into ugly wives. An ideological process happened in which it became provincial to promote the idea of a welfare state. This is a dystopian process.

GÖRAN: The idea of utopia as something struggling to be born is beautiful. Can you say anything on the horizon that is trying to get born at the end of this millennium? Years thought it would be a "savage God".

HELMUT: Now we know - it was a "savage god".

CHRIS: What's waiting to be born is the same thing that was waiting to be born in each millennium and in each time in history: a longing for freedom from the limitations of the body, the family and economics. The longing for a place where to live is easy instead of hard. This longing takes many different forms. In the beginning of this century, socialism was a utopian idea that wanted radical changes. It introduced social reforms: shortening of working hours, banishment of child labour. It was believed that these reforms were steps towards utopia.

What's different about our situation now is that technological development makes it possible for us to achieve social utopia, but something is stopping us. Maybe it's these 357 people plus all of their lockstep who follow them around. This is a great frustration because it makes faith in utopia difficult. If at all possible. This loss of faith is a dangerous psychological state.

HELMUT: The condition is that worldwide there's huge unemployment. In Germany and in France there are little movements of unemployed people who do not accept reality and how Capital is divided. In the USA, where we are told many jobs were created in the last ten years, there are many people doing what are called "3 buck jobs". Here, in a social sense, we can expect something. A movement could be born. Technology will bring us to a point where we won't need physical labour and this will have social consequences.

CHRIS: When I came to Sweden people were talking already about 4 hour working days. Volvo was working on robot systems, to eliminate manual labour. But these thoughts have disappeared from the public arena today.

HELMUT: And when did it happen? It happened after the fall of the Berlin wall. Capital lost its enemy. And they need an enemy for the inner structure of competition that makes Capital produce. They had to look for a new enemy. And they found it in the welfare state.

GÖRAN: But what about the young generations? There's a strong tendency for them to find their personal, individual, subjective utopia and not wait for political mass movements.

HELMUT: We have to differentiate here between a social utopia and a personal utopia. It's not the same. Social utopia has been reached already to a great degree in the developed world. On the other hand, private, subjective utopia shouldn't necessarily mean only looking inside yourself.

CHRIS: Exactly. The artists I have the greatest respect for are those who manage to find a balance between subjective utopia and the collective ideal. This is the great yin and yang of society and the individual.

HELMUT: There is something in all utopias that is very violent. There is a dominant male perspective - to conquer an unknown land. This negative aspect should be corrected for the next millennium. If you read Plato, Thomas Moore, Bacon, especially Bacon - they're describing a terrible, horrifying state. This has been the nucleus of all utopias we've known so far. In socialism, we had no limitations for the masses and many limitations for the individual. This is a non-dialectic process. It's a dialectic "standing still".

CHRIS: The situation of a lost utopia is very fertile. That's one of the reasons why I've been turning my eyes towards the Baltic and the Balkans. When I toured in Poland in 1988, during martial law, people would say: "You came from America. It's an amazing place." I would tell them it's not so amazing: "You haven't seen the homelessness, you've only seen the surface". They thought I was lying to them. They thought I had become a naïve Swede who still had illusions about socialism. Then I would remind them that I grew up in the USA, that I lived there for 22 years. I love the people there deeply, but I can't stand to see what's going on.

What happened when the Berlin wall came down, was that everyone lost faith that there was a utopia waiting "on the other side". Of course there were people who never had illusions, but the masses were shocked. There were generations of people trained in a communist organised cultural scene - highly disciplined, highly demanding. These artists suddenly looked around and saw that they were even more limited than before, in terms of resources, access to space and audience.

GÖRAN: In this process there are many young people who a) have doubts that social utopias can work at all or b) they cannot wait for it so they go and search for a personal utopia.

HELMUT: For many older people, being able to buy bananas and having passports already looks like utopia incarnate. But this is not enough for their children. For them the search for personal utopia has also become a social fashion, a mass phenomenon. It is enhanced by the MTV. It's a generation which is interested in art as an event. They're not interested in things which go on. Their idea of life is to burn out in a second. The techno generation has a special ecstasy drug for it. Ordinary life is boring and it should be compressed into a moment of vitality. In all utopias there is the Hegelian idea of reducing all time to a moment. The moment when time is of no importance, when it stops being an issue. It is the hope for eternal life. The utopian aspect of art is to bring time down to a moment. To make audiences lose themselves in the spectacle. To conquer time.

HELMUT: Social utopia has been reached already to a great degree in the developed world. On the other hand, private, subjective utopia shouldn't necessarily mean only looking inside yourself.

GORAN: Forever is now.

HELMUT: Forever is now! Being alive is the moment of dying.

CHRIS: The beautiful thing about artists, as opposed to passive consumers, is that they're all busy doing something. They're actively trying to express. The young Latvian director Regins said to me the other day that he'd never been a part of a collective project, around a central theme, i.e. a collective utopia. He'd been very suspicious of collective utopias, after the Soviet experience. But suddenly - in ESTONIA - he found himself in another kind of environment that he wasn't aware of, that he found healthy, where he could find a balance between subjective and objective.

GORAN: A fashionable question: Have we reached the end of history?

HELMUT: It's not to be reached. It's our doom not to reach it. But history has changed from what it's traditionally been. The world has become simultaneous. In Greek times the messenger had to run 42 kilometers from Marathon to bring the news. That's how history was created. Now history starts when the CNN camera starts. The Gulf War battles wouldn't start before the cameras were on. This changes the elementary premise of history - that it's an epic which someone will retell. This changes all literature too.

GORAN: From epic to what?

CHRIS: From the epic to the fragmentary. Broken images.

HELMUT: But still, even today the artist has to re-tell the moment. This is his/her duty. Art has the advantage of being a shadow. It doesn't

true works of art these's an enigma which you can't follow. If you want a definition of what a piece of true art is, you can find it there. And this enigma is sitting in a windowless cell. You can't see into it. And what's inside can't look out.

GORAN: Like a capsule.

HELMUT: Like a capsule in which time stands still. Where there is a perfect harmony between nature and mankind, subject and object. And that's an enigma to us. Maybe that's a mirror image of ourselves.

GORAN: How does this simultaneity of everything affect our daily life?

HELMUT: The negative aspect is that everything is important in the same way. Basketball, opera, political documentary, a cartoon - it's all the same. This de-structures the world. There's



have to behave as reality. Reality has the disadvantage of believing it's real. That's the problem with reality. Art has a duty to find it's new epic breath. It's not easy. But it must be done. Otherwise we'll lose our memory.

CHRIS: Allen Ginsberg said once in an interview: in the sixties we woke up and said, my God, the world is going to hell, we must do something about it. And we tried to do something about it. In the seventies, we woke up and said, my God, the world is going to hell, and there's nothing we can do about it. He didn't find this depressing. Just another context to work with.

We must battle knowing there's no way of winning. History is fluid. Fluidity never has an end. For me it's not frightening, it's something.

HELMUT: Utopia deals with killing time. Time is killing us, we kill time with our Utopias. In

as totality any more. You can try to create a totality by adding all of the pieces together, but it won't work.

CHRIS: Bruce Springsteen: "37 channels and nothing on".

GORAN: How do you get out of this corner as an artist?

CHRIS: You don't. You make a temple in the corner. A temple where time stands still and death is not so dangerous.

GORAN: How does all this connect to the utopia/dystopia project as a part of Landscape X? Is the Steppes Church an artistic temple?

CHRIS: Churches are places for reflection. And autumn is a season for reflective when

CHRIS: I believe that deep inside every individual is a little anarchist with a need for utopia, standing there and screaming: If only! If only I bought a lottery ticket, if only I had a better job, if only I had this kind of family, if only I changed my sex



darkness falls in Sweden. We'll create a platform to exchange ideas about the re-creation of utopia, and the rejection of dystopia. We'll frame this symposium with two guest performances, by Theatre Gaudience from Poland and by Theatre Borevo from Russia. Companies that have made their art into a life project. This kind of ritual is the essence of the words "church" or "temple" for me.

GORAN: In Eastern Europe optimistic Utopias are not fashionable. What is in fashion is cynical dystopian ideas. Why?

HELMUT: The word Utopia has been denounced. And it's been done by Capital.

CHRIS: It's all a question of power. People naturally dream of a better life. And power politics easily manipulates this desire. People are told what to do to have a better life. You can convince them to move on the wrong track. Communism did this. After a number of years the gas ran out. Now someone else is standing there - you can call it the American, Hollywood, McDonalds tradition - offering an alternative.

But I believe that deep inside every individual is a little anarchist with a need for utopia, standing there and screaming: If only! If only I bought a lottery ticket, if only I had a better job, if only I had this kind of family, if only I changed my sex. Too many people stop searching and become passive buyers of other people's systems.

I like the intellectual chaos which arises when people open their minds and get confronted with the Other. And the other looks just like you. And it becomes apparent that it wasn't better on the other side of the fence, the grass wasn't greener there.

HELMUT: Salvation is another aspect of utopia. Utopia deals with death. It tells you you're mortal, but it gives you a possibility of a fear-less dying. This idea is inside all utopias. This idea of fulfilled time. Without this life would be horribly empty. Utopia gives you an idea of another, better life.

CHRIS: Everything that limits us, all limitations, mental, physical, sexual - we want to deal with. We want to be free. Like the baby who wants to get born.

HELMUT: But then the baby encounters pain.

GORAN: Will genetic programming help us in the future?

HELMUT: Genetic programming can give hair to bald men. And can make their lives less miserable. But Utopia is not about not dying. It is about dying without fear. This is a different thing. Adorno, referring to a Beckett play, said that these characters have lost their power to die. This is a problem of mankind. One utopian aspect is to regain this power. Which goes against the genetic ideas.

I had a grandmother who was dying when I was 10. She was dying for three or four years. She was bored with life and decided to die. She faded away. It was terrible. She feared to live and there was no purpose to her life.

GORAN: There's an abundance of dystopian science fiction. What are the most dystopian qualities of our life at the end of the millennium?

HELMUT: I think it's the competition in cynicism. Everyone is trying to be more cynical than the next person. Cynicism and cynical attitude abound when there's no chance to succeed. The growth of population has something to do with it too. There's too much misery

reported on TV. Too many people dying each second. This brings about a cynical outlook on life. The moral imperative doesn't work anymore with 6 billion people.

CHRIS: But if we reverse the same idea we can say: Yes, there are millions of people dying, the media is filled with catastrophes, but at the same time 99% of the people are dealing humanely with each other and just going about their own business.

GORAN: Why does Stockholm 98 support a project like this?

CHRIS: They get tickled by it.

GORAN: Is it a Millenarian symposium?

HELMUT: Our Millenium ended twice already. In 1945, and in 1989. We are already living in another era.

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In late July in Zagreb, our magazine organised a talk on the subject of UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA, in which several

prominent Croatian philosophers, theoreticians of literature and theatre,

film and theatre directors, musicologists, dramaturgists, as well as

Small night talks on Utopia and Dystopia



undergraduate and

graduate students at the Faculty
of Philosophy and the Academy of

Dramatic Art took part.



The editorial board of *Frakcija*

suggested the following

associated topics:

utopia, eschatology, theology; philosophic utopia,

political utopia, cultural utopia; interculturalism;

territory /and/ utopia; utopia and terror;

utopia as a training for democracy; utopia at a discount;

dream and utopia; utopia in theatre / theatre as utopia;

event as an intrusion of the utopian?; dystopia.



In the following pages we bring only select
extracts from the discussion.

VJERAN ŽUPPA: The associated topics we wanted to use as starting points for our discussion of utopia and dystopia tonight were not chosen at random. And it is precisely the willing degradation of the intellect that Gulliver finds scandalous.

LJULJANA FILIPOVIĆ: In its day, after being published in 1726, a tale, as it often the case, became an intellectual fad. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

As we know, as his first voyage (in the South sea), Gulliver suffers a shipwreck and after a dream awakes in the land of Lilliput.

Awakening in different conditions and scenes, as well as cultures, is an important aspect of this book. Gulliver sleeps a lot, but dreams, as it were, awake. When he wanted to rise, as we recall from this youth literature, he was unable to. His hands and legs were fastened to the ground. On his journey, Gulliver introduces us into alien cultures and worlds, the inhabitants of which resemble us more closely than we would expect from their appearance. But, that is necessary for this novel to fulfil its purpose. Gulliver, that is, has to share some cultural traits with the Lilliputians, or the gigantic beings, in order for them to be able to successfully make his society the object of their irony. Gulliver himself is inclined to chauvinistic views, but likewise loathingly disposed to Satire. By means of imaginary cultures, Jonathan Swift thus questions his own. Even as utopia is a rebellion against the ruling present, through this device it is reproduced and reflected remaining within the limits of the known.

In *Civilization and its Discontents* Das Unbehagen in der Kultur, 1930, Freud notices that not only do man's works created by means of science and technology sound like fairy tales, but that they are also the fulfilment of fairy tale wishes. But, as we know, in a fairy tale, the drama of the terrible also takes place. Today we witness the fantasies coming true ever faster. However, just like many systems did not see the meaning of their existence that was only eventually interpreted by us, so we now in the position to reassess the theme of utopia. We are likewise in danger of exhausting this theme as another intellectual fad. But, even as such, it would confirm that "the truth is out there," reminding us of the interesting fact considering the present situation of our culture. Details of the description of everyday life, of enjoying its aesthetic moments, in utopian works confirms that reality is firmly grounded and the alternative world, in the projection of the real, comfortably near. In Freud's psychoanalytic context, Gulliver has the role of the crew who puts out fire by urinating, which is a sex act of sorts, and only he who manages to resist this pleasure, controls the fire and reaps a cultural victory. Why is that important? Because the fate of mankind,

according to Freud, hinges on whether and to what extent will people be able to overcome the hindrance of the drive to aggression and self-destruction. And it is precisely the willing degradation of the intellect that Gulliver finds scandalous.

We meet a Gulliver bound in Lilliput once again in Stephen Toole's *Companions*. If the political image of the modern age is Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan, the moral point of view of "national" power and superpower, will for the posterity be the image of Lennan Gulliver awakening fettered. For Toole's, the Lilliputian organizations are those that question the rightness of contemporary society and call into question the moral authority of the absolute centralized national states. In the long run, power and force wear themselves out and the name of the game should in the future be influence not might. Precisely in that sphere, the Lilliputians have certain advantages. The book was published in 1998 and we can already witness that not even the Lilliputian organizations resist corruption. Terry Eagleton *London Review of Books*, 6, 1997 wittily remarks that the true seers of our age are the specialists who, taking a good look at the economic system, can reassure the owners that their profit is safe for the next thirty years. It is thus clear that those who can afford this already live in utopia.

The rest of us are probably like Swift's traveller Gulliver, unfortunately often failing to meet his requirement that the point of travellers should be to make people wiser and better. But, let us recall the end of Gulliver. He finds the land of his dreams where he wants to settle down, but fails to meet the conditions for stay. Since he no longer feels himself to be a member of the human race, the return to the homeland is painful. His only comfort being talking to himself four hours a day.

With respect to the fact that, in Lacanian parlance, reality has the character of fiction (it is structured by symbolic mechanisms), we should either be content to talk to horses, or to remove our frustration for a while following some intellectual fad, or to act by learning from utopian failures. So, even if we take this to be a dream, let us remember that in it we touch the very core of reality.

DURDA OTČAČAN: How to organize a state? This is the question addressed by Plato, Augustine, Thomas More. As for art, the fairy tale, that which belongs to the imagination, was never a problem, for it is its characteristic. As long as More's *Utopia* is a work of art, that is fiction, it is harmless. The people who have suggested this subject came from the Western hemisphere, and so do More himself and his essay, that is a sketch for a social system of Anglo-Saxon provenance. When this subject was made topical again precisely in the West, it seemed



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to me that it should be stressed that we have experienced something the West did not: violence of the indefiniteness of political utopia. In contrast to the West, we are politically and socially susceptible to the matter in a different manner.

Art can respond to utopia when this violence of indefiniteness, whether through fascism, socialism, Communism, begins to utilize art out of "impatience," using art as if they owned it. I would like to know, in this political and philosophical aspect, from Mose and his plan, that moment when something imaginary, therefore from the domain of art, goes over into the domain of reality. I sense that there is something crucial about that moment.

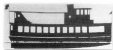
KERAN ZUPPA: The problem we are addressing is such that its depth cannot be exhausted, and we are fed up with the surface. We are in an embarrassing situation with this old-fashioned theme. The utopia should have replaced the theological, which promised heaven, and threatened hell. The utopia, for its part, demonstrated in the twentieth century solely that the politically biased trail into the "promised land" is a hell where the terror of happiness is in operation. The human, defensible, became the paradoxical. The insight we have in the character and work of captain Gulliver is something that can be a definition of the human predicament, at least in this century, and I shall therefore try to define it by means of this concept or that character - Gulliver.

Gulliver is a man who is never of right size or in the right place. And when he finds the land of his dreams, he has to be content to talk to horses. This leads me, not without cynicism, to underline our similar fate/situation through just that moment. The twentieth century man, the man of modernity and postmodernity, is most akin to something Gulliver brings as his content.

Burda has stated Popper's main thesis, according to which utopias, when they were put as aims to be politically brought about, have demonstrated all their representiveness: in the name of utopia, for the sake of utopia, everything was permitted. The contemporary French philosopher François Lyotard says we have sacrificed too much out of our longing for the whole and the unified.

NETAD PUHOVSKI: Although the subject of this discussion is the antinomy of utopia and dystopia, I shall try to put it in a slightly different perspective and add to the apparent antinomy a third element of the triangle that seems very important to me, and that is called "reality" - so, reality as a place "in-between." In 1976, in the Theater BTD, I staged one of the

Filipović: Gulliver finds the land of his dreams where he wants to settle down, but fails to meet the conditions for stay. Since he no longer feels himself to be a member of the human race, the return to the homeland is painful, his only comfort being talking to horses four hours a day



Nine Dentic 85' Excursion Boat, 1995, acrylic on canvas

principal works of negative utopia (dystopia). Orwell's 1984. After several months of rehearsals, videos concerning dramatic adaptions, problem technology we used in the play, the acting style suited to such an expansion and the like, we faced the problem of ending.

Respecting the convention, the actors wanted simply to go out and take a bow. I regarded that as pointless after two hours of a nauseating dehumanizing theatrical event. I decided there would be no bow, but that the participants in the performance would appear once more at the end - on a television screen, lined up like a firing squad. At first, the audience was confused there was nobody on stage, then the picture appeared, the audience continued to applaud, and the actors began, one by one, against my will, to enter the stage. In the discussion after the performance, the argument was: was reality, the reality of (petit) bourgeois theatre convention. Reality has thus significantly disturbed the anti-utopian stage. War is being vindicated by utopian reasons, and peace is being made for reasons imposed by reality: reality is that which after all our talk of utopia will topple on us.

In reality, practically as dead being replaces peace as the possibility of being and the possibility of realizing a utopia. In this discussion, the difference between utopian and real socialism has already been pointed out. As long as socialism was on the utopian side, it was all right, but when it moved into reality, we know what came to pass.

To me it seems that utopia and reality are antonyms only necessarily. But, is there a possibility of some active, I venture to say though it be unpopular, dialectical relationship, i.e. some relationship of mediation between utopia and reality? It seems there is, because otherwise we reach the simple proposition that the reality of our utopia actually matches the dystopia of our reality.

To prove this, I have been surfing the Internet these days. And I found that, thank God, utopia is alive and well, and is being made come true right now. At the address www.new-utopia.com, one can find out that in the Caribbean a utopia is being created in the form of an island-state, a principality, to be completed on October 1st, 1999.

Let us see what is the reality of utopia today: New utopia has no taxes of any kind, its citizens can live anywhere in the world while they keep their money in Utopia, the hospital that is being built there will be devoted primarily to treatments to stop the process of aging, and from the international university only one diploma will be available, the diploma in New Age Studies. In that utopia there are no arts, no theatre, cinema, painting. The principles of that principality (it is believed that democracies do not function, and therefore a monarchy is being established) are free enterprise and capitalism, tax free economy, securing freedom and property, all in keeping with the principles of commercial entrepreneurship. This is the reality of the utopia of a highly developed, cynical, self-sufficient, and I dare say brutal capitalism. To me personally, it is the worst dystopia possible, and for some it might be a utopia, an off shore "heaven on earth."

The reality is, I would say, that which is to be feared! Not only utopia!

LOJANA FILIPOVIĆ: If we are discussing where utopia is, this example found on the Internet is of particular interest. Utopia is not within reach, it is always in the South seas, far off shore. I do not see why we should be surprised by the example of the Caribbean principality. That cynical capitalist utopia is a real frank utopia. It has its norms, and everybody is an artist there, those who produce their lives as art on financial grounds. As Terry Eagleton would say, every utopia is a dystopia by the same token, for like the Kantian sublime it constantly reminds us of our mental constraints even as we are trying to overcome them.

KERAN ZUPPA: We have reached the point in our discussion where we are trying to situate utopia. The fact is that this utopia, that we are attempting to discuss right now, shows that we should for the time being exclude discussion of the forms of political utopia. The question

remains whether utopia has some natural place of its own, whether it is generated from somewhere else, whether somebody or something belongs to it, and whether the term, that really can be called old-fashioned, can still be used, that is whether it is still operative in any way.

I maintain that the utopian is still at work and that it will never cease being so. I would thus turn this discussion towards the designation of our magazine (magazine for performing arts) and toward our topics.

I regard the actor as an instrument of a no-place or outspace. And the character, that which the actor takes upon himself, is a time for the Third One, not the Other, but, I repeat, the Third. I intend to draw this discussion closer to the problem of individuality and his structure. If I say the character is a time for the Third One, I see the Third One, and not the Other, someone whom the actor summons. The actor appears as the utopian place that resolves the problem of individuality, as the problem of the Third One: of him, of that, or, as Levinas would say, of Thatness (il/le). The actor is he who still bears, incessantly taking over ever new characters. Those who are not Him. That which is not Him, the problem of Thatness, or of That Third Something, and thus has to open up the question of individuality itself over and over again.

The question of individuality and individuation is a complex question. The object of any knowledge can, per definitionem, only be that entity whose kind of being is universal. The individuals are, on the contrary, beings that no other being resembles: the individuals exist, or overreach, such methodological standards by their very nature. They do not possess the kind of being that is by its nature universal. Therefore, individuality cannot be defined. The individual is in its essence a no-place; that moment we would all like to approach, would all like to place ourselves in, but that place defies definition, just as he who is in such a position defies definition, so that this definition would be applicable to all other individuals. Thus, there is something, it seems to me, in reality utopia is anchored in: the utopian question is essentially the question of individuality itself. As long as the question of individuality, of subjectivity is being posed (and this question, be it said in passing, is being posed only from the late 18th century onwards), so long the question of no-place abides: its energy, the energy of that no-place, will act out of the will to individuality, and the will of the will of the individual, as something that is being approached, but cannot be defined.

NIKOLA PUHONSKI: The question, however, remains whether there be a utopia that is not social? Are we scared by the reality of utopia. I.e. by the utopia that has reached reality and

Otržan: When utopia was made topical again precisely in the West, it seemed to me that it should be stressed that we have experienced something the West did not: violence of the infeasibility of political utopias. In contrast to the West, we are politically and socially susceptible to the matter in a different manner



M/S Danzig 30 Traveler Yacht Stranpet, 1999, acrylic on canvas

shows its autocratic, authoritarian, criminal face? Is there something that is not social utopia? Is there a personal utopia and can it be called utopia with respect to that we know as the concept of utopia?

MILKO ŠPARENBLER: I regard the question of utopia through art. For instance, the utopia of Bach's - a perfect world; of Mozart's, *Wolff's*, Balanchine's. On what grounds or how did this necessity and permanence of artistic utopia survive. All these visions with a child... What is the worth of it all? Utopian are necessary in art, but without social programmes.

DURGA OTRŽAN: Art always had to build with one hand, and use the other to guard that which was being built. That which it was building is what is new, and what is new is the most ancient: the individual. The individual is indivisible and inseparable. Aristotle said, but the individual goes through the character and that might be the answer why there is so much man the theatre, as opposed to the other arts. As if man chose the theatre to dwell in.

On the eve of the First World War, Glucksmann would wake up the citizens of Zürich shouting: "Wake up, catastrophe is coming!" The difference between any old lunatic walking people just like that and the artist who deemed his mission in that moment be just such an action, and not something else, is already the position of the artist essentially different from that

before Mozart's time, when artists were hanged at the court or of their patrons. So, it may be that by means of this utopian impulse the artist commits an act of free choice, of free will. Here lost his head not as an artist, but as a political adversary. Mandelstam lost his head for criticizing utopia, but both as an artist and an adversary. He who wanted to wake people up so as to prevent a catastrophe is like a little seed a huge tree grows from, for instance Brecht who then insists on that insight: "Wake up!"

I speak of the role of art when it already has to defend itself from the consequences of utopia or when it implies that political and social utopia have done harm, that one ought to act and help. Art is in such situations put in the place of the antagonist in this external utopia, in reality, where what we call social utopia takes place. Now did this development of the artist's personality come about, that he opposes the world, one against all? I believe it always was like that. But for such an activity one needs, so to speak, a quarry. This is the task of art at the moment! After the Second World War a similar thing occurs. The living Theatre, the happenings, and the like, seek a new stage. As performing individuals they face their recipients. The performer is granted the right to authentically perform as a person and face the audience. Their demand is different from that of Glucksmann and Brecht. Be artists, not take a revolution! Art, defending itself, does itself a favour, moves a step forward in developing its tradition. And what tradition is that? The artist here present inspired such thoughts in me.

Mr Šporenblak, someone who is responsible for what he is doing because he is educated, and has passed all stages of the development so that for whatever he is doing he bears full responsibility - was once asked on television, the question verging on curiosity and accusation: how can he direct too? To ask a choreographer how can he (also) direct a performance is absurd: it is more likely for a ballet choreographer to be able to do without a director than for a director to be able to direct a ballet without a choreographer. Mr Šporenblak answered by invoking none other than Sophocles: "No, that is quite normal in my line of work. Sophocles was a dancer, actor, costume designer, director and playwright." I mean, even if there be no great merit, these are great paragraphs.

MILKO ŠPARENBLER: It is all the same business. Today's barbarity of specialisation is a horror. I would like to put the question regarding people like Bach once again. How did he shelter himself from his time propagating his Bachian utopia? How did Vivaldi? Monteverdi with children? How did these utopian events defend themselves?

VIGORAN ZUPPA: Quite simply, I must say. They have defended themselves in a very simple manner: through individuality.

In the time of real socialism, they spoke of the universal man, the hero, the total, collective man. For us, who at the time were beginning to take interest in philosophy, the question of the subject was a revelation, for nothing ever spoke of you and me but only of us. The twentieth century theatre poses as its exclusive question the question of individuality. In a textual way, therefore on the level of characters but also on the level of the actor.

Two texts important for the history of the twentieth century are *Fitzner* and *Caspar*.

To me, these two texts seem very important when we are attempting to discuss the problem of individuality, and see the theatre as the stage of the utopia of the Third One. Between that which we call the project and that which we call the result falls something we call an interval: "the reflexive cavity." Lucien would say it is difficult "to be oneself." He, therefore, forms the verb "to be" as a reflexive one.

Between the project and the result there is a "lack of being," that is one must increasingly "live the lack of one's own being." If *Caspar* says he is "here only by chance," and *Fitzner* that he is "nothing," that it means that their existence is an interval of the "lack," the final process of fulfilling something that cannot be fulfilled.

The subject, like any Christian, must bear that cross of his, he must bear his "by chance" and his "nothing," for only thus does he keep that "nothing" from dissolving into an absolute *non-being*. The theme of a lack that ought to be, the warning of the difficulty of "being oneself," is a persistent theme in the twentieth century theatre, from Jarry to Müller. The incessant research work on the problem of individuality reaches its apogee at the end of the twentieth century, all through the problems that we could have seen at the last year Eureka, and that is questioning the stage of the body. When *Fitzner* has nothing more to say, for he is "nothing," when *Caspar* admits, in his attempt at the recollection of the subject, that he might be "me by chance only," that is a part of the problem by means of which the theatre discusses the problem of individuality at the level of speech. After that, of course, there is only one more level left: the expressiveness of the body as the "vehicle of being in time" (Merleau-Ponty).

The utopian as the no-place, as the moment of something that is always out of reach, where we constantly feel the lack of fullness and the reflexive cavity between the project and the result, that is truly the place that belongs to the twentieth century theatre, the theatre that is, to the core, a laboratory of the individuality as a stepwise project. This is my closing proposition, that individuality, personality, subject-

Zuppa: As long as the question of individuality, of subjectivity is being posed, so long the question of no-place abides; its energy, the energy of that no-place, will act out of the will to individuality, and the will of the wisp of the individual, as something that is being approached, but cannot be defined



Nina Ivančič: 55' Florida Bay Voyager, 1995, on a canvas

tivity and the body as its "vehicle," are a utopian project of this century's theatre. The actor, immersed up to his neck in this project all the time, stands at the place that is no longer anybody's, and so also not his.

In conclusion, I would like to remind you what Jarry said, writing *Ubu Roi*, said of the only author and the only character he held in esteem. He says of Hamlet that he is, for instance, "more alive than some man pausing by, because he is more complex and has more synthesis, he is even the only one alive for he is a walking abstraction." If Hamlet is all that, then he is, in contemporary philosophical parlance, a "man of nothing," that is the demerit of reflection comes into the world through him. That, to me, is the moment of utmost importance, from which, in this or any other discussion, I would like to start.

The question of the subject that I urge in various ways, like the problem of the social event, of sociality and historicity, is accurately exposed in a fragment of Sloterdijk's and his demand for radical autobiography. For, in the moment when Sloterdijk is summing up the situation his generation started from and when he says that they were coming out of the shell and bombed Berlin like rats from a basement, and when he says that in the end they, the Germans, were borne or carried away by a current of evil or unfortunate traditions, that they had ontologically bad parents, he

then says that the only thing left is "radical autobiography," which he defines in the following way: one ought to take upon oneself the pathos and the responsibility for the whole of one's existence. That means that in the context of the social, i.e. the historical, and in contrast to the current of unfortunate traditions, Sloterdijk brings out the question of the subject as the only remaining constitutive question.

NENAD PUNDOVSKI: I imagine a new triangle, positioned somewhere between Lenin, Grotowski and the actress from Bergman's *Marion*, the one, of course, who decided to keep silent because she can no longer speak sentences that are not hers, thus turning this radical silence into an individual act, completely un-historical and, in fact, counter-productive. It therefore seems to me that somewhere between the social utopia and the subjective act there is also the question of the group, which can be followed in the theatre as an interesting way I speak primarily of the attempts after the "Gefährte" and of the bourgeois theatre, i.e. after the start of a series of theatre movements that seek exactly that, the group as a new home, as their new utopia, someplace where one finds the world and the individual alike. Thus we come across a triad of sorts: the social utopia, the utopia of the group and the question of the individual as probably the most radical rethinking of such a position of dislocation, of taking over of a certain place, or, in other words, of accepting responsibility.

LJELJANA FILIPOVIĆ: When we talk of the question of identity, I would come back to the hapless Gulliver. When he found the land of his dreams, he lost his identity there. He, in a manner of speaking, continued to live in madness. That is a special kind of utopia to be borne in mind.

Reality never ceases to confirm the notorious phrase from the *X-Men*: "The truth is out there." Better not to roam around here much. One of the themes that entered through dreams, i.e. dreams as the royal road to the unconscious, is the theme of dreams and the unconscious. In this context what happens to the theatre which goes out into the street should be to see: everyone is an actor nowadays, not only actors: the politicians, television reporters. Writers want to look like film stars, and film stars like intellectuals. The solipsistic coincidence is that the word actor is always being used in the masculine. Had we put all that in the feminine we would have got different connotations. I would not tackle the myth of reality.

Translated from the Croatian by Tomislav Brlek
Edited by Boris Kolaric

Theatre of Memory

Emil Hrvatin

The remnants of a performance are the signs of its disintegration. The performance falls apart into pieces of memory dispersed among its protagonists and the witnesses of its occurrence. This happens already during the performance itself, as Kurosawa's *Ran* shows on another level, and as Richard Schechner, who dedicated most of his theatrical projects to the deconstruction of the spectator, confirms with his hypotheses about the "selective inattention" of the spectator.

Sophie Calle, in her project *Dislocations* (1991), asked the staff of the Museum of Modern Art in New York to describe Magritte's painting *The Menace Anonyme*, which was not there at the moment. One of them (a guard?) could remember only "men in black suits" and several "drops of red blood." Another one (a preservationist?) could only say a few words regarding the style or the subject of the painting, but

Gewillo, directed by Emil Hrvatin, Piccola Teatro, Milan, 1996
photo: Alberto Novelli

Drawing of
Camillo's
Theatre



described its dimensions, the condition the colours were in, and the quality of the frame with no hesitation whatsoever.

Some of the arts depends so much on memory as theatre does. Memory is what constitutes theatre. Memory is the u-topian site of the theatre, the place that is not there, and without which the theatre simply does not exist.

1. Giulio Camillo Delminio's project *Theatre of Memory* was finally realized in Milan in 1544. It is a wooden installation of amphitheatrical shape in which the roles of the auditorium and stage are invented, in which there is hardly enough space for two bodies and in which the "performance" consists of drawings arranged like steps. This is more or less all that the historical sources meticulously analyzed in contemporary historiographic literature can tell us about the unusual, pseudoclassically entitled project of the Italian polyhistor Giulio Camillo, whose other surname, Delminio, points to his Croatian origins (Delminian is the ancient name of what is now Tenzidagrad, from where Camillo's father moved to Friuli). Camillo left behind a booklet *The Use of Theatre*, in which he hermetically (his studies are strongly influenced by the Italian Neoplatonists, especially Pico della Mirandola) explained the structure and the content of the Theatre of Memory, completely ignoring the description of its materialization.

The scope of Camillo's project *Theatre of Memory* was to store all knowledge about the Universe in one place. As such, it can be incorporated into the tradition of archives keeping and systematization of knowledge from the Library of Babel to the French Encyclopaedists

and to the scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, who are developing the idea of "the final book", a virtual library that would contain all the titles printed. But Camillo's project really detaches from another tradition, the tradition of the art of memory. The art of memory is a common name for various mnemonic techniques used by the ancient rhetoricians and later authors until the invention of the press, when the need to memorize large chunks of texts disappeared. The essence of the art of memory is to link the texts on the subjects of speeches to visual motifs. Visual icons help in memorizing texts. Until the Renaissance, these visual motifs were some existing objects, streets of a town, windows or doors of buildings... Camillo, appearing when the art of memory was already dying (the poem had already been invented), invents the text - image relation, and creates a special place (theatre), with a special iconography (among the painters who designed the Theatre of Memory the name of Titian is also mentioned), and with special manner of linking images to the texts. No more is it a question of memorizing a text through linking it to the known, existing objects; we enter the space in which visual motif stimulates our associative mechanisms. However, what is essential for Camillo's Theatre and what makes him our contemporary is the relation between the visual and other information stored in his theatre.

Entering Camillo's Theatre of Memory we come across the structure of seven columns with seven rows, i.e. 49 subject fields, 49 subject windows/drawers. At first glance, these windows/drawers are identical to library catalogues: each piece of information leads to a specified, unique place (to the book). Camillo's

Theatre works in a more complex way, since the subject fields are cross-referenced, so the piece of information, the visual motif, the fragment we find in a specific drawer is not only a reflexive stimulus to memory, but also a guide to other subject fields, other drawers, from where it is again possible to go into yet another field and so ad infinitum. When entering the fields of the Theatre of Memory, we create an interactive web of knowledge, the final shape of which is completely in our hands. We can use the Theatre of Memory as an entertaining pastime, as a hermetic and mystical view of the Universe, or as a way of a creative use of memory.

Through being interactive, through his methodology of the weblike connection, and the openness of his project to current superstructures (update & upgrade), from the Renaissance perspective anticipated the Internet, the web of webs, an unordered space flooded with enormous amount of information, which, however, has a potential for global open archives, universal virtual library.

2. The history of theatre has overlooked Camillo completely, although the name of the Theatre of Memory itself is paradoxical enough to arouse at least a theoretical interest. He is treated at best as one of the followers of Vitruvian amphitheatrical architecture. In one of the few preserved records that evoke the Theatre of Memory, a letter to Erasmus of Rotterdam, Vignas Balchensis writes about the striking way in which the Theatre of Memory works, and which lead Camillo to call his project a theatre:

"He (Camillo) pretends that all things that the human mind can conceive and which we

cannot see with the corporeal eye, after being collected together by diligent meditation may be expressed by certain corporeal signs in such a way that the beholder may at once perceive with his eye everything that is either wise hidden in the depths of the human mind. And it is because of this corporeal looking that he calls it a theatre." (Fuentes, 117)

Corporeal looking

In the aesthetic sense, Canilla's project is the forerunner of the intersection of the total stage space (constructed ambivalent theatre) and verbal pictorial installations (the projects of Joseph Kounin, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer). The effect of the Theatre of Memory was, of course, minimal, but the methodology of thought incorporated into Canilla's Theatre warns that it was as because of the limited technological level.

Two contemporary artistic views see the Theatre of Memory as a machine or at least a mechanism, a kinetic installation. In the early eighties, for the Biennale in Venice, Daniel Libeskind made three machines crucial for architecture: the reading machine, the memory machine, and the writing machine. The memory machine is an attempt to transfer the way in which the Theatre of Memory works. Libeskind decided to reveal to the spectator the machinery of the theatre itself, which is otherwise hidden, and without which theatre cannot function, making thus a simple installation in which the inscriptions and icons of memory move and change like puppets on a string.

Carlos Fuentes, Mexican Nobel prize winner, in his major novel *Fire Memory* (1975) speaks of an enclosed visible space to which nobody is admitted (somewhat similar to the library in Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*, published five years later). Only Canilla knew the secret of "how he lights the theatre, how he projects, composes, or sizes from nowhere those moving images to the screens and railings, what the ropes he moves and buttons he pushes mean." (Fuentes, II, 87)

The next step, after Fuentes' and Libeskind's, apart from the deobjectification of the effect of the Theatre of Memory, would be the virtualisation of these two machines. The entry into Canilla's Theatre of Memory is in fact a self-referential path into our own memory.

3. What does the hypothesis that Canilla's idea was to make the human mind a universal library, an encyclopaedia of knowledge to be activated by the theatre of memory as a reminder, as a way of speaking, really mean? It is by no means true that Canilla's scope was to create hypertextual beings, that he would

have seen the realisation of his project in people memorising whole books. Since the invention of the press, and particularly with the development of new communications technologies, the human mind has been becoming the master, the supervisor of knowledge; it recognises the texts, to know how to get to them and how to use them in a creative manner is more important than to memorise them.

Canilla is the topographer / cartographer of memory. The imperative of today is not to "memorise" in categories, but to be able to locate the segments of memory - herein lies Canilla's modernity: "Memory not as something passive, so, so to speak, bumping into objects placed in the immediate surroundings, but as an activity that engages and builds the time pattern that enables the experience of the past (as a story for the present), because the past as something bygone simply does not exist in art, and particularly in electronic, cybernetic art." (Grebenc, 9)

Fuentes added a poetic dimension to Canilla's amazing character. Fuentes' Canilla wants to know what to do with memory, how could it be of any use to us. Fuentes stratifies memory, putting, through Canilla's mouth, in the first place the memory of events that never happened, but could have happened. This is the most perfect of memories: "The images of my theatre include all the possibilities of the past, but represent also all the possibilities of the future, because if we knew that which never occurred, we will know what years to come into being at all costs... History repeats itself only because we are not aware of the other possibility of every historical event... And if we knew history, we could prevent its repeating." (Fuentes, II, 85)

4. Every utopia has its productive dimension. Utopia is not to be reached, to be realised - the great paradox of Lewis Carroll: working on the map of Great Britain which was to comprise every object on the ground, the cartographers were obliged to work in ever smaller scale, until they came to the scale of 1:1, i.e. that the ideal map of Great Britain is Great Britain itself. The object itself is already its own ideal representation. Utopia is there to generate the desire, to make it persistent. Utopia is always a process, never the result.

5. Canilla's Theatre of Memory is the object anticipating the Renaissance image of contemporary art, in which there are no boundaries among arts, in which cultures are intertwined vertically (pop-élite-ethno) and horizontally (interculturalism), in which art is linked to sciences, the media, social practices.

Translated from the Croatian by Lea Dowling

Through being interactive, through his methodology of the weblike connection, and the openness of his project to current superstructures (update & upgrade), from the Renaissance perspective anticipated the Internet



Canilla, *Piccola Teatra*, Milan, 1998
photo: Luigi Cinisaglia

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Bojana Kunst

Of Body Natural and Artificial

In this essay I would like to go back a while, to the beginning of the century, and speak of one of the main characteristics of the then current utopias of the body, which have profoundly affected the representation of the body in the century now drawing to its close. The paradoxes, hidden in the utopias of the natural body, to this day continue to haunt and shape the fugitive margin of the body: the body, having already been through all imaginable forms of restructuring, deforming, deconstruction, as well as the innumerable ways of reading, appear now only as a scandal, always ready to point to the flesh (we can call it pleasure too), always coming in through the back door, always on that ever thinning line separating body from machine, at the moment, in the words of Deena Harnway, when "machines become disturbingly alive." A notion, dating from the early 20th century, seems to me to be typical of the thinking about utopias inscribed in the body, which also guard and dictate the ways of its representation: it is the hopeless search for the natural body, that after all determines the beginnings of modern dance also, as well as certain important shifts in theatrical representation. Movement is the representational strategy which has become the be-all and end-all of that search. Movement of any kind: "This new irrational 'something,' that comes from the flowing life flow, is the new corporeality... body culture, gymnastics, dance, cult dance, spatial dance, new corporeity, new bodily sensation, body-soul, new callisthenics, movement, rhythmic with its innumerable attributes... These are the signs of the new."¹ Movement as the basic method of naturalizing and shaping of the body is the theme treated by some of the most eminent apologists of the return to the natural body, among them the most active and representative being the *Life Before Movement* (*Lebensreformierung* or *Lebensreform-Bewegung*), which has explicitly combined the popular tendency for life and social reform of the masses with the aesthetic reform, and thus in the best tradition of the early 20th century movements, which have mostly sought to unite art and life, brought about the new concept of the body. Numerous pioneers of modern dance, e.g. Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Mary Wigman, Rudolf Laban, who emphasised the return to the natural body, i.e. its autonomous expressivity, as the basic method of liberating modern dance from the traditional discourses (above all, the figural rhetoric of the ballet), were directly or indirectly involved with these movements. Aesthetic autonomy of the body has thus through *Lebensreformierung* and through modern dance been developed above all by

means of methodical exploration of the kinetics, i.e. the rhythmical quality, of the body, and through the real emancipational aesthetic theory of movement expression, that should bring man and his body back to their original being.

When we inspect closely the character of the natural body in the statements of its apologists at the beginning of the 20th century, we should by no means be misled by their enthusiasm, for it is easy to dismiss them at first sight as being only an expression of the resistance to industrialisation and the modern way of life. Although this resistance can be understood as the source of the important beginning-of-the-century movements, which somehow start to intimate the problematic co-existence of man and machine in the modern urban way of life, it is precisely in their techniques (that range from the search for rhythm and new kinetic structures, to such absurdities as nude skiing), that the fugitive, dynamic, energetic and kinetic body, that has no fixed skin boundary, is reflected, the body capable of endless kinetic flow, superfluous, emergent efficiency, swaying. Kinetic transmissibility and mediation: the body, then, the kinetic characteristics of which mirror the characteristics of modern art, i.e. technological structures, confronting at the beginning of the century the human body with new forms of representation (the invisible dynamics of electricity, audio-visual machines, the problem of speed, etc.). Modern sports, dance, gymnastics, rhythmic, swimming, movement flow (occasionally accompanied by the use of other body codes), give back to the body some of its natural characteristics, simultaneously blending it with the actions of machines, training it to the new dynamic rhythm of automatised efficiency. The concept of natural body at the beginning of the century is thus not some new romantic concept of longing for nature, i.e. the natural life of the body, as it might at first seem: that body is in fact the body of hygienic minimum, obviously healthy and fertile body, the transformed body that has no problems in inhabiting some machine habitat of Le Corbusier's, in its essence already transformed and connected to the artificial. A blasphemous thought easily comes to mind, revealing the utopia constantly being disclosed in the case of the natural body: the image of body fullness, the techniques of representation of which are often caught in the image of the artificial, the automation, the machine (this goes especially for the performing arts). The image, where the in fact impossible body - in this instance, the body of hygienic minimum, the body stripped of everything, presented as the sovereignty of kinetic flow only - is linked to the image of the machine, of artificial structure, hides in itself also the end of one of the most important utopias of the

1 Wolfgang Iser: *Körper des Menschen*, München, 1972.

Brightenment project, that at the beginning of the 20th century completely blends the natural and the artificial. No wonder, then, it was precisely the artificial body that in the thirties became the central metaphor which witnesses the wonder of life (of this I will say more in the conclusion).

What consequences does this have for the self-representation of the body? The emergence of modern dance is of special interest here, for a new artistic form was being born, the form which seems to reflect in its beginnings certain basic relations between the natural and the artificial. A fundamental insight seems to be the origin of modern dance: expressive autonomy, i.e. kinetic autonomy, of the body, which represents the body itself as an autonomous aesthetic field, subject only to its own epidermal openness and its own kinetic flow. Dance, then, in the words of the poet Valéry, becomes "a way of inner life, which satisfies that psychological notion of new life, where physiology is dominant."² Although in almost every programmatic statement made by the reformers and originators of modern dance the tendency of return to the natural body is being emphasised,³ sometimes also connected to the original ritual body, it is precisely in this tendency that we find the new physiology inscribed, the

2 Paul Valéry:
"Philosophie
de la danse"
in: *Oeuvres I*,
éditions
Gallimard,
1955, p.
1098.

new body engineering, shaped in Isadora Duncan the collective co-existence of body and machine as the dynamic motor and kinetic energy structure, offering also the ideal of autonomy and power. The most important metaphors that we find in the artistic concepts in the beginnings of modern dance (and in everyday life thereafter), like the movement flow

[the key word when the expression of the body is to be designated], rhythmicity, energy, rhythmic flow, thrusts, pulsations, swaying, etc. are, although understood as the basic means of making the body natural and free, in fact, characteristics of the body as dynamic motor. The union of body and machine in everyday urban way of life thus strongly influences the modern dance image of the body as pulsating movement flow. Every return to the origin of the body (in dance as well) is therefore paradoxically linked to its artificial/impossible equivalent.

It would be wrong to understand the alienation as a process that, despite certain illusions of returning to its origins, deprives the body of its autonomy and subjects it to the artificial. It is important that, through revealing some links between the natural and the artificial, we can follow certain characteristics of new bodily representation. All the more, it seems, because this interplay of body and machine (i.e. the characteristics of new technology), gives back its

autonomy to the body, not only establishing it as a new autonomous aesthetic form with a specific system of signs and a separate structure, but turning its autonomous expressivity into the fundamental system of meaning in modern dance, the fugitive kinetics into its structural network, a form no longer mimetic but dynamic and subject to its own laws. And this autonomy is specific, determined by the fugitive quality and dynamics of the artificial structure, the comprehensibility of the sign no longer being its concern. Herein lies the essential paradox of movement as the basic technique of making the body natural: it draws attention to the body, although it is losing it ever more, the moving body becoming a loose structural network, a minimalist play of parts, shadows, traces. The meaning, therefore, vanishes, and in its stead a "structure" is revealed, which later also becomes the essential modernist passages and model of the existence of the body.

The French philosopher Michel Bernard claims that one of the consequences of the new physicality of the body is precisely the precedence of energy over meaning, which results in the breakdown of communication, i.e. in the reception becoming more difficult.⁴ Instead of a transparent gestural body sign, we have in front of us a pulsating energy field: the expressivity of the body equals the epidermal energy flow. Thus the very structural and representational status of the body is changed, the new kinetic body refuses to be subjected to the imperiation of the transparent sign and instead of it declares the sovereign intention of the body, which is both the subject and the object, which represents and exposes itself. The moving body lives through the pulsation and circulation of its energies, establishes autonomous energy language, the characteristics of which are incessant reversals, velocity, discontinuity, dissemination, etc. The new kinetics can thus, according to Bernard, be understood as "the art of loss" (*l'art de la déperdition*): the art of loss in the sphere of the spectator's comprehension, for this following of the shadows of loss becomes the essential principle of the spectator's seeing, i.e. interpretation (embodied in contemporary performance art), but also the art of loss of the body itself. This is no longer the mimetic body, but the body that

Bernard: "Les nouveaux codes corporels de la danse contemporaine," in: *La danse art du XXI^e siècle*, éditions Payot Larcosme, 1990, pp. 66-76.

produces its own image and form, no longer the mimetic body illustrating nor the mimetic body expressing (certain relations toward objects, its inner self, another body, etc. from within), it continually clashes with its own form and declares it the only possible language. That body, therefore, can be said to be autonomous, which continuously moves along the fugitive border of fixing its own image. Corporal autonomy in this instance means also democratic autonomy of body parts and proportions: the body is no longer hierarchically structured, every part having its determined place in the hierarchy of body parts and regions, but a structural network, comprised of elements of equal value, a pulsating whole/difference of separate body segments.⁵

In 1908, the conservative German theatre critic Jacobsohn writing of a performance of *King Lear*, directed by Max Reinhardt, stated this slogan as the main negative argument: "Alles ist ein Puß." "Although he used it to support his negative evaluation, Jacobsohn's slogan is in fact absolutely accurate. Autonomous body

is being revealed in us as in some kind of epidermal flow, as an epidermal medium of communication, that determines the very structure of the artistic event.

At the moment, then, "when the authority of things is shaken," when "matter, space and time are no longer what they were,"⁶ the body is transformed into a dispersed communication network, through which contact with the audience is established, is transformed into a network of nervous reception and sending, its epidermal flow - thrusts, sways, pulsation, - confront us directly with the simultaneity of information the body receives and transmits. In this epidermal flow we can perceive a reflection of the developing media reality at the beginning of the 20th century, the new audio-visual technology, and the new visibility and information forms that were later to develop from it. The moving body thus by means of its "actualizing" techniques cuts into the very structure of representation, which is far from being as coherent a field as it might have seemed at the beginning of the 20th century. Or, in other words: the more

the body represents itself as autonomous body, the more we witness the disappearance of the body. Movement, the direct reflection of kinetic energy structure, thus deconstructs the representation of the body, confronts the spectator with the fugitive transparency, that in its fundamental conditions has nothing in common with the natural. The less the spectator, confronted with ever new shifts, traps, thrusts, can connect them in a system, the more the transparent body is emptied out. The kinetic flow, which is a condition for the establishing of the specific autonomy of the body, thus simultaneously becomes the basic technique of revealing the body, which could be the cause of the ever increasing tendency towards disembodiment of the image of the body in art.

In 1930, at the Dresden International Exposition of Hygiene, the German audience saw for the first time the *Man of Glass* (or *X-*

Ray Man), a model of a standing man with hands raised high in the air, completely transparent, and with flashing, colour-changing, glass organs. He was the audio-visual centre of the spectacle entitled *The Wonders of Life*, a precise opened up glass anatomy, above which the following was written: "Man is amazed at the sea, that knows no rest, at rivers, and at the spectacle of the starry sky, forgetting that of all wonders he himself is the greatest."⁷ The body, therefore, is nothing more and nothing less than a pure technical and artistic masterpiece, it is the augmented body, which precisely for being augmented, artificial, and completely transparent, testifies to the wonders of life, and with its hands raised high, symbolises the connection between the above and the below. This image of the artificial body at the beginning of the 20th century is not only a consequence of the essential longing for the impossible body, for the body with no bounds, and with infinite possibilities of transformation, but also an aesthetic and political ideal, a universal trivial metaphor, an aesthetic, ideological, and political stereotype, which through testifying to the wonders of life becomes ever more the basic model of everyday bodies.

The man of glass is thus that body in which at the beginning of the 20th century the artificial and the natural seem to

merge in shining transparency. The body is once again represented as a model, a creation, which is an image of progress, knowledge, and science, the delicious synthesis of machine and man, the vision of the future. And that model, i.e. creation, the cultivation of the mechanic and the organic, by methods like movement, callisthenics, eugenics, etc., also reveals the concepts and mentalities which have enabled that new transparency to come into being: a brutal, racist, and fascist policy, which understands the transformed model of the body as a perfectly manipulated, predictable, and controlled body. The utopian desire, then, conceives of the unlimited and autonomous body, the body as pure aesthetic sign. On the one hand, as regards dynamic technological structures, it indeed opens a different structure of body representation, and of the new aesthetic strategy related to it, while on the other hand it also reveals its political (i.e. ideological) face. In the flashing man of glass we can thus see how every body utopia, in the moment when it merges with the political machinery of transformation and control of the body, easily becomes its horrible opposite. This radical experience of the body as transparent predictability and danger of its political organomechanic idyll is the reason we can no longer speak of the fascination of the body as autonomous transparent whole. Instead of the autonomous body, we can speak of the autonomous fugitive body, which on the other hand offers us the simulated reality of its impossible mirror.

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5 Cf. Joachim Fielsch: "Audiovisuelle Medien, Warenklarer und Theaterveränderer," in: Erika Fischer-Lichte: *Theater - Avantgarde, A, Frankfurt Verlag*, p. 23. Moreover, when the conservative critic wanted to criticise his theatre, they compared it to the supermarket, a phenomenon of the early 20th century, where the flow - of goods, materials, customers - is the organising principle.

7 Walter Benjamin: "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," (Slavensko translation in:) *Immanent 20. Storoletje*, Izbika Konder, 1988; English translation in: *Illuminations*, London, 1973.

8 Paul Valéry, quoted in Benjamin, see note 7.

9 Quoted in: C. Boyle: *Cybernetics: Model Perception in the Age of the Electronic Communication*, p. 99.

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excerpt from a play
by Hanon Reznikov
The Living Theatre,
1995.

utopia

scene 8 - Seraphim
the body is borne in procession

ENSEMBLE

how far is it

how far is it

tell me

to the sea?

St. Theresa

lies wounded

wounded

on the strand

Theresa!

(see sounds)

the arrow

stuck deep

the angel

gone back to Rome

the body is set upon a pedestal as a statue

audience players perform scene from The Winter's Tale which they rehearsed at intermission, ensemble in attendance at super-numeraries

LEONTES

Thou art Hermione!

PAULINA

Resolve you for more amazement... I'll make the statue move indeed!

LEONTES

I am content to look on...

PAULINA

Then all stand still: Or those that think it is unlawful business I am about, let them depart.

LEONTES

Proceed: no feet shall stir.

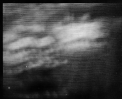
PAULINA

It is requir'd you do awake your faith. Music, awake her: strike!

Awakening of Faith musical event



Stills from the
video tape of
Living Theatre's
Paradise Now



ENSEMBLE (group 1)

Hermione has been reborn
a thousand times and more
hope is given, courage taken
that's what theater's for

test the limit of your sight
lend your help, do what's right -
sing "U"

ENSEMBLE (group 2)

when your reach exceeds your grasp
you can act two ways:
move with passion toward your goal
or moan through all your days

make the gesture, help us out
lift your hands high, with us shout
out "TO"

ENSEMBLE (group 3)

don't get hung up on what's wrong
that way sorrow lies
put your finger on the hot spot
where the feelings rise

wake the lady, tap your feet
feel the rhythm "neath your seat
say "PI"

ENSEMBLE (group 4)

when you cast your gaze about
you may wonder why
some are stuck like wasps in honey
others learn to fly
imagination sets us free
I dream you, you dream me
chant "A"

Berniece awakens

PAULINA

You perceive she sties.

LEIGHTS

O, she's warm!

celebratory exit dance, then an electronic rustling
sound

light pulsates dark

HERMIONE

yet there is a rustling of wings

ENSEMBLE

I never saw a tapir
I never knew a slave
I walked three hundred miles and had it coasted
against me
I made a friend of strangers
I read the poems of Robert Bly
I called myself an anarchist
(actors add own statements)

and the rustling beyond all reason
is a rustling of wings
wings... wings
ensemble and audience onstage form ghost pair of
wings, Cherabine at center

the heart is a compass
point us to
the landscape of our choice
wings transform into landscape tableau

utopia is no place
but the hotspot of desire
spoon of desire within landscape - names of desires
expressed at the lagoon

no local stop
but the name of the line
trolley bell - ensemble begins to move into audience
and these voices
half of ensemble repeats individual statements all at
once
our voices
other half of ensemble repeats individual statements
all at once
these are our living voices, saying.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

On the day we begin to appertition with care he
bounty that is our gift-

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

-then each one can turn to any other and say
turning, extending hands

ENSEMBLE

"my mind is open as my hand"

AUDIENCE MEMBER 3

then the familiar has a new color

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

and the unknown a scent like time -

ENSEMBLE

making hand contact: no place, baby

trolley bell - house darkness, actors return to stage -
sun-flashes begin

I never said goodbye to anybody,
Not without a cry.
cry
A signal,
doctylic, telegraphic gesture
A crazy smile,
swelling madly
This smile.
And yawns.
reach toward audience member kissed at Promise
scene, bring his back to lips
blinding sunlight up in audience's eyes as stage light
fades
blackout



Miroslav Krleža

FINALE

An Essay in Quinquagenticennial Analysis

*The position of mankind in the Universe, elevation 313. A normal scenic section of a bal-
cony with trenches, stockades and cannons. On the one hand, as if Wallenstein were lay-
ing siege to a fort in the Thirty Years War, and on the other, a post at any front Russo-
Japanese around Lianyung or Port Arthur in 1904-05 or during the First Imperialist War
1914-1918. Above elevation 313, the open
celestial colosse with zodiacs and a starry sky
spreading in a nocturnal July horizon with
glistening celestial planets in a wide range
between Orion and Sirius. This play of light is
being interrupted by shortening blinks of
sunny daylight and a dark stormy nocturnal
darkness with a baleful wind whistling. The
daily and nocturnal lightings alternate at
high pace, as if the whole post at elevation
313 rotated in a crystal ball, illuminated for
a moment by a solar searchlight or wrapped
in the coils of night.*

*A trench on the front-line. Soldiers in
every costume of centuries past. From a
Roman cavalry legionnaire with a red horse*

*tail on his helmet, to a Hungarian Hussar and
a musketeer in a sixteenth century lace collar,
this motley crew lies all mixed up in the
trenches waging a war. In the trenches, vari-
ous exotic divinities from a bronze Buddha to
a wooden Christ stand, and before these in
Mohammedan arabesques scrawled inscrip-
tions and before red and tricolor banners
and Bushman gods kneel the Japanese in
khaki uniforms and the Niggers of Central
Africa in their greasy dark nudity and the
national guardians and the carabinieri, and
they are all praying, bowing and lighting can-
dles before the statues. It is a moment of
repose between the frogs and only here and
there from time to time a solitary shot is
heard. In a landward breeze the banners of
all nations at war flutter and flap, the lion of
the Venetian Republic mingling with the sym-
bols of equatorial America and the blue-and-
white Hellenic flag with the Union Jack in a
preposterous polychromatic - black-poll-
red-white-green - motif, like at the Olympics
or at football matches.*



Photographs from
Igor Kadar's cycle
Almost Drama

A soldier is praying to a Roman goddess bearing devoutly: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen!

All the pious others join in a chorus in various tongues of all continents: Ave Maria, gratias plenas!

Voice of the first soldier, like the voice of a priest in a church at requiem: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen!

Chorus: Ave Maria, gratias plenas, Dominas tecum.

This goes on all the time, ceaselessly, monotonously, in a maddening, completely senseless humdrum.

To the left, sheltered underneath the arched or palisade, the guzzling soldiers sit, in helmets of modern attack columns and Spanish arabesque chairs, drinking, gambling and playing cards and making out with the canteen stretchers.

Nervous and passionate voices of players and gamblers are heard: Ace of clubs! Ace of diamonds! Queen of hearts! Bank! Queen of hearts! Diamonds! Ace of spades! Clubs, bank! 'Tain't clubs but spades! 'Tain't seven but five! Bank! Bank 'tain't I give, I don't! Black jack! As!

Voice of a debaucher: Hoy-de-ho, hoy-de-hay, grant me heaven, Lord, or give me a gal, death to war, hail the brother!

Voice of the pious soldier: El libera nos a malo...

One of the pious falls dead.

Voice of the telephone operator underground: Hello! This is the post at elevation three hundred thirteen speaking! Situation as before! One dead, two wounded!

The medical-corps personnel with Ange red crosses on white sashes arrive and with great care carry the wounded away on stretchers.

The leader of the pious, in a voice shrill as hell: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen!

Voices in the chorus, gamblers and debauchers shouting, drinking, smashing glasses, singing. In the distance, quietly the cannons. Several warriors collapse, bleeding and screaming. Tempo quietly as the increase.

Voice of the invisible telephone operator underground: Hello! This is the post at elevation three hundred thirteen speaking! Situation as before! Three dead, seven wounded! Send us much propaganda as you can! Morale on the decline! Certain doubts regarding the cause of this slaughter are being raised! Send five detective novels!

The medical-corps personnel enter with red crosses and carry the dead and wounded away on stretchers.

The pious soldier is praying, others responding in a chorus, the gamblers are drinking, in the distance, the cannons, and this goes on non stop day in day out, day and night, always the same and unaltered. The sun is seen rising and setting, the moonlight shines, the stars are falling and the flames, the leaves fall and the blackberry bush grows green again, butterflies fly past and the rains fall, the thunders are thundering and the clouds pass over, while these men lie in a temporary grave, pray to God, drink and gamble and telephone and die in the monotonous lighting of day and night, night and day. A year, another year, a hundred years, seven thousand years, night and day, day and night, always the same.

Voice of the telephone operator underground: Hello! This is elevation three hundred thirteen speaking! Situation as before! Seven dead, seven wounded! We have lost orientation in space and time! Inform us of our position, what lies in store for us? What are the chances for reason to prevail? Shall we continue for the next seven thousand years? Total apathy has set in! Fresh narcotics, please! Rum and prayer books are running out! Important!

Voice of the pious soldier: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen!

Voice of the player at cards: Ace of diamonds, ace of clubs! Ace of diamonds! Ace of clubs!

Cantons. The medical-corps. Day and night, night and day. Autumn, winter, spring, summer, autumn, winter, spring, cough of the bilious, song of the spring waters, birds.

A man, who has been reading a book front stage and was deep in thought observing these events, throws the book impatiently away over the barbed wire stretched around the post.

Man, in interior monologue: The thing about the man of our day is that he no longer walks at all fours but is a biped who has been walking erect on his hind legs and building houses and starting fires and writing books with his front legs for ten thousand years already. It is beyond me why do I have to lie in this mild gutter where a bullet can hit my skull any moment.

Voices of the pious in a chorus: Hail Mary, full of grace, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen!

Voice of the player at cards: Ace of diamonds! Ace of clubs! Ace of diamonds! Ace of clubs!

Voice of the telephone operator: Hello! Situation as before! Two dead, two wounded!



Cannons. The medical-corps. Day and night. Night and day. Autumn.

Man: It is autumn now! Now a gentle breeze flickers over the woods and gossamer floats in the air. How good it would be to go for a walk over the fields in the warm afternoon sun and listen to the maize stalks rustling. Why am I sitting away here and what is it all for?

Another man, lying next to this one, like all the others in a uniform, in a quiet, resigned voice: It is not good to think of such matters aloud! One might come to harm! These are corrosive thoughts, they gnaw what is called the epiphenomenistic superstructure. One ought to have unflinching faith in life, as if it were an exceptionally wise pastime, the only purpose of which is to last. A pastime is like all other pastimes a thing of long duration, and a bit boring, like chess, mah-jongg or bridge, for instance. Games should be played without thinking!

First man: On the contrary! The only salvation is this, to think aloud about it all! That gives one the strength not to lose his mind! For, believe me, that is just what it sometimes seems to me, as if I have gone mad a long time ago somewhere and have been buried someplace deep at the bottom of the most abominable folly, and all that were taking place somewhere under the ground, in a grave! When I look at these people praying to dumb wooden statues in the ditch and lighting candles to something that does not exist, and when I listen to these gamblers, oh well, then I wonder why do I lie here as if I were a dead object and why is it I do not move? I ought to move, I am a normal person! In the name of human dignity, we should move. We are not dead objects. Mankind is reduced today to an inebriate formula of self-destruction. This unnatural absurdity will, in the end, rest on our heads!

Second man: I fail to understand you! You are a pessimist, you see everything black. It makes no sense to see everything black! I fail to comprehend such Faustian characters! It is pointless: hanging one's head against the wall! The wall is of material undoubtedly harder than the head. Life itself - should we take it philosophically - is nothing but some sort of adjustment! One ought to know how to adapt, that is all! Behaviourism is a contemporary scientific formula. Apart from clinging to reality, a wiser formula has as of yet not been invented by man. Yes, here and there, some corrections, absolutely trivial, of the universal machinery, that operates, as is known, according to natural laws, in a complete vacuum, that is what man has come up with, but nothing more.

First man: And your civil occupation, pray tell me what is it?

Second man: I am a citizen, and I mean a

citizen in the sense of being a proprietor, not a Jacobin! I am a landlord with a modest annuity. Owner of a modest two-storied building, at the solid pre-war price of 36,000 golden Crowns. One two-storied building is the outskirts and another downtown, that is. The one downtown is much more profitable. I only wait for this census to end to return to my balcony. For, you know, I have a balcony and a red awning at my balcony. Under my balcony, all day long a small fountain bubbles! Sparrows bathe there, in that fountain, dangerous scoundrels they are.



First man: And you intend to go back to your balcony? O, you are a proper fool! We are all going to kick the bucket here, do you understand? And because of that it would be in our own interest to do something about it, now, right away, at once, this very instant, today is any case!

Second man: No, no, please, quiesce now, move, that is my motto! My home - my castle, my front, my little life here and now, no great expectations, within the scope of given possibilities. To the best of my abilities or within bounds, in general we do what we can... You see, I have planted some onions and salad here, I work my little garden, and,



under the circumstances, I am content. Even this must pass! You see everything black! Why leave our skin here? It is by no means certain! What is the sense of racking your brains like another Faust? There are limits man must not venture beyond. You know that at the Faustian limits the devil lies in wait for the human mind! But, pray, may I ask what is the occupation that you have devoted yourself to, that is, I mean, as a civilian?

First man: I have no occupation as a civilian! As a civilian I am a civilian, I have no balcony, no clock owning, no fountain in front of my house, no goldfishes (in my cranium), and no sparrows! As for the Faustian limits, that's nonsense, those Faustian limits of yours! There are no limits for the human mind, my dear; it is boundless.

Second man: As can be seen, under certain extraordinary conditions, the human mind could hardly be said to be boundless. These our troubles and woes, for instance, I dare say, are such as to prove the opposite. But that is something to be accepted. Human pride has often led man into pernicious delusions and adventures. Faust is one such symbol of human weakness.

First man: Leave that Faust of yours alone, for God's sake! Faust is a puppet on a string, and we are no puppets! We are soldiers! We are no literatures, we are reality! We wage wars against our will, and besides we do not know what we fight for! One thing is clear: we are being killed against our will, we are being killed for somebody else's interests.

A third man, who has been listening to the conversation, high-strung: O, how well do I understand every word of yours! That's right! We are no puppets on a string and we ought to show some initiative around here! Right now, in pristine rapture! I shall rise, take the white flag and go with it over to the other side, to explain to everyone what is the matter, that the whole thing is in fact a delusion!

He jumped up, took the white banner and climbed over the barbed wire fence in a flash, white flag in hand. Several shots resounded and the next moment the man falls bleeding back into the ditch and dies silently.

Voice of the leader of the pious: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, blessed is the fruit of thy womb!

Voice of the player at cards: Ace of diamonds! Ace of clubs! Ace of diamonds! I give, I don't, bank, black jack!

Voice of the subterranean telephone operator: Situation here as before! One dead! Repeatedly I demand propaganda materials, prayer books, run and holy images! Doubts arise regarding the cosmic cause. Morale on the decline. Our press is worthless.

First man, kneels next to the dead man and covers his head with a white banner: There you see it, this is innocent blood shed! This lamb of God took all our sins upon himself and fell in the name of peace! Mankind's ascent to the stars is covered with such lambs alone! Through rough ways to the stars!

Second man: For this innocent blood, you yourself - personally - are to blame! Had you not filled his head with some nebulous ideals of stars and mankind, he would have still been alive, among us! You are a Bolshevik! This innocent blood will fall on your head!

First man: You are a moron, a Philistine and you don't understand a thing! You are a proprietor, the devil take you!

Second man: You are a sans-culotte and a burglar and a demagogue! You ought to be shot like a mongrel. Why didn't you climb the stockade yourself, but have sent this innocent child to a certain death? Shame on you!

First man: There is nothing for me to be ashamed of! My conscience is clear!

Second man: You have no conscience! You do not believe in God and are capable of anything! You are an infidel! As soon as the commander arrives, I shall report you for high treason! You were instigating a mutiny! You wanted us to surrender to the enemy and lay down our arms! You are a coward! You ought to be hanged!

First man, enraged, animated: What, I a coward? Take this from a coward!

He hurls himself at the opponent and they fist-fight, when the latter pulls a revolver firing several times, in the heat of the struggle he strangles him, bleeding, himself scotched. Alarm. The musketeers, the Japanese, the archbishops, the kussars, the Bushmans, all become silent during this brawl.

Voice of the commander, wearing a mask of a terrible grinning Korean demon, eyes wide open, sharp edged teeth, in the uniform of a regular infantry colonel: What is this? What happened? Someone got drunk again? Voices of the legislators: Men picked up a fight!

Commander: What men? We are not men, we are soldiers! Who picked up a fight where? What does it mean? Did I tell you not to throw papers in the ditch? This is not a toilet, this is post three hundred thirteen! Whose sin is this? I ask, whose sin is this? Did I tell you not to throw this around the ditch? This is no tomb, by the hundred heavenly saints, this is the front line! Here every man must be at his post! Is this how you salute? Is that a salute? Be gone, each to his post! Is this a battle? Is this a way to wage war? Fire! Forward figures pressure by the hedge right and left! Seven hundred! Rapid fire! Charge!

The whole international scattered around the gatter and a shot is heard here and there.



Then faster and faster, like an engine.

Commander, to the first man, who stares at his opponent at the same spot motionless: And why do you loiter here as if you had nothing to do? There by the poplar you have a beautiful prostrate figure! The animal basks in the sun! Charge! Fire!

First man: Man walks on two legs, not four! Man is human and should remain human! Masking, humanity, philanthropy, man!

Commander: Well, what is the matter? Why do you stare at me so stupidly? There you have a prostrate figure by the poplar! And another one! Three more! The swines are bearing ready for the onslaught! Didn't you hear me? Do I have to repeat it once again? Fire!

First man: I heard, but I will not shoot!

Commander: What? What kind of logic is that? Here you smash skulls and would not shoot there? You are insane! Charge!

First man: I am not insane, I just don't want to shoot! I know what I'm doing! Man, mankind! Ideals! Per aspera ad astra!

Commander: Wha-at? You would not shoot? Pull out a revolver and shoot the man. Hey! Corporal! Wang this madman at the ditch entrance! On a tablet around his neck write: do not keep company with the mad! In fine legible calligraphic hand! Have you understood?

Corporal: Ay, sir, colonel, sir! Sits down and writes on a tablet, in fair calligraphic hand, this fine ay, thick line down: Do not keep company with the mad!

The man was hanged as ordered at the ditch entrance. The battle ceased and again

only a shot or two here and there is heard. The players at cards are playing cards, the pions are praying.

Voice of the subterranean telephone operator: Post three hundred thirteen speaking! Situation as before! Three dead! Three wounded! The position so-so! Send three crates of rum and two box cars of holy images! St. Cecilia recommended! Female figures by all means! Baroque woman suits, nude baroque woman suits! And don't forget Saint Roch! He guards against wounds!

Voice of the pinger at cards: Ace of clubs! Ace of diamonds!

Voice of the man at prayer: Hail Mary, full of grace, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen!

Day and night, Night and day! Autumn, winter, spring, summer, Day and night, Night and day! A thousand years! One hundred thousand years! A billion years! Eternity!

(Around 1917)

Translated from the Croatian by Tomislav Brlek

MIROSLAV KRLEŽA is one of the most important and the most prolific Croatian drama and prose writer of the 20th century

Slobodan Šnajder

The snake. The Devil. Bosnia.

We have discovered the fairy tale, we have been discovered by the fairy tale, and it even gave us a counsel of sorts considering our future. The past and the future, like some kind of a bridge over our troubled present, come together in an arch

In the 19th century, the educated people, the latter-day scholars, traveled the European provinces gathering folk lore.

That, of course, was but a variant of the battle cry always heard in times of extreme crisis: *Ad fontes*. They were led by the intuition - that's some sort of spiritual per-ecology - that the sources were not only buried but being even more jeopardized by the so called progress. Those people were discovering the old world of myths and fairy tales.

First the old world was discovered by the new world, and then the new world was discovered by the old. Malraux says somewhere. It is in this sense that those ancient collectors and keepers of folk lore, like some new Nibelungs, really help us learn something about our world, even, granted a few felicitous coincidences, to discover it anew. I shall now proceed to explain this process using an example I believe to know rather well.

Snakeskin, The
Royal Danish
Theatre,
Copenhagen,
1998
photo Henrik
Sagreen





In 1994, I wanted to write a play about the mass rapes in Bosnia. It must surely be legitimate for a writer to have certain wishes as regards his subject. My motives were being helpless and enraged. For art, that is more than next to nothing.

It was then I found, in one such lore collector, a Southslavic Herder, the Serbian linguist Vuk S. Karadžić's sack a record of a fairy tale about a woman who dreams she is carrying a snake in her womb. There are two recorded versions of the tale with significant differences, but both end happily. The woman was not wrong, as women never are, in the respect of what it was she was carrying. She bore a snake. The snake is a fair youth at night, drinking back to a snake in the morning. The woman, as the tale goes, shall have a child instead of a snake should she burn its skin.

Both versions give the same counsel. In both versions, after many a trouble, the mother gets the child through the snake's miraculous metamorphosis. The mythical offspring is transformed into a real one. Yet, and that is the crux of the matter, the youth retains some of the advantages he had in the shape of a snake. He knows where riches aplenty are hidden and makes his mother happy with them.

The fairy tale obviously keeps the age old myth of the duality of human nature. Moreover, it has something that sheds a new light on the relations in Bosnia today in a rather bizarre way: the fairy tale belongs to the Serbs of Eastern Herzegovina, all its characters are clearly designated as Muslims, and the language is so beautiful that it could almost be ancient Croatian.⁷ There is something fantastic about all this, of course, and having encountered it I felt driven down my spine as if facing some abyss. We have discovered the fairy tale, we have been discovered by the fairy tale, and it even gave us a counsel of sorts considering our future. The past and the future, like some kind of a bridge over our troubled present, come together in an arch. One enters the *Waldhau* over the rainbow, across the bridge the old Slavs would go, their souls having, contrary to the Christian dogma, roamed a long while, into the other world. All right, that was a felicitous find.

It helped me write the play *Snake Skin*. The woman of the fairy tale became an actual Bosnian woman, but then again, as a metaphor, it also became that fairy tale called,

⁷ Since nationalistic of Croatian linguists take Herzegovina to be the cradle of the Croatian language.

or to be called, Bosnia. The woman in the tale did certainly not undergo the experience mass rape, for the folk lore knows no such thing. To me it seems that her fear of the snake was an expression of some erotic distress of hers, some sort of guilt. The girl in my play, that carries a snake inside her, has a different kind of fear. She conceives of herself as a split being carrying its enemy within itself. The play consists of hardly anything but the various ways of talking the others into making peace with the snake.

Over her bed, Christian, in two of its three major variants, and Islamic fundamentalism cross their swords. These fundamentalisms want to use her midwifery in very similar ways. Azra, the character of my play, demands a right to her own, private one. Though the Iraqi Bosnian rights, in a place every here has long abandoned, the girl in my play looks through the ancient fairy tale in her mind as if it were a manual. For what? A manual for the procedure that would, like some washing machine, cleanse the myth of the recent layers of dirt and make it shine through again in its original sense that would mean liberation from midwifery. She has no intention of succumbing to the injunctions of the fundamentalisms contesting for her bed, remaining true to an injunction more profound. In this sense, my dark play is mad with optimism. Azra's plight is terrible. None of the seven existing versions establishes unambiguously what is if she gave birth to. I do not know either, and think she is the only one who does. I wrote the play to show that in spite of everything there might be ways for Azra to accept the snake within her, and for reasons quite contrary to those Catholic fundamentalism brings up to speak of the severity of life. But in the play, this is left undecided: only Azra knows. So far the readings have been using that plurality and it did no harm.

All right, I wrote the play.

The first performance was in the German town of Tübingen in 1994. The dramaturges have instituted proceedings against the text immediately. Certain difficulties were hinted at. Then, seated at a table, we read the line of the Snake together. Apparently, that is where the difficulties were. They said to me: "You believe Azra should give birth to a snake, Mr. Snajder?" I told them that is more or less what I believe, as it seems to me Azra is capable of reading the ancient manual correctly and turning the snake into a child.

"But it is a snake that becomes a child, yes?" I did not understand the point of the question. I did not understand that it was an exciting historic moment: namely, that not only historic events but two aspects of modernity, two contemporary worlds, were discerning over my play. That she carries a snake in her womb was not such a problem! The metaphor seemed

Snakekin,
Rhinoscore
Company,
Festival
Bionysia,
Venice, 1995



The Snake is the *advocatus diaboli* in the West; to discourse and bargain with it, and then give birth to it, is the same as to do all that with Satan

Snakekin,
Rhinoscore
Company,
Festival
Dionysia,
Venice,
1995



powerful to everyone for it could be grasped instantly. The snake, conceived in evil, in an act of violence, the worst violence imaginable, is an act that promotes ethnic clearing into something horrendously absolute. No, the problem was the next step, in the mythical unfolding of the theme, so to speak: "Just how do I imagine a snake could become a child, a being the West places at the throne of absolute innocence?" And then I understood: The Snake is the *advocatus diaboli* in the West; to discourse and bargain with it, and then give birth to it, is the same as to do all that with Satan.

And now here is what I guess only theater can do. Since I made an effort for the boundaries of my language not to be the boundaries of my world, I seemed to myself some latter-day scholastic travelling the traditions, but through modernity as well, with a bag full of specimens, respects (I speak in terms of black magic), that explain the varieties of our cultures. In the West, the snake faces badly. As we move further East, the snake increases in stature.

The fairy tale, let us not forget, belongs to a windmilled crossroads of traditions where all existing fundamentalisms are going berserk today. Fundamentalism, in my opinion, and I offer now a rather provisional definition that suits my present purpose, is nothing more than the strengthening of the potential of any monotheistic religion. This applies in particular to the particular covenant that binds the chosen people and the Gily One, excluding all other peoples from such covenant. There are in the Holy Writ, and I have included them in *Snake Skin*, descriptions of ethnic cleansing as it was carried out in Bosnia. True, the Bible does not speak of mass rape, but it does speak of taking the women of the vanquished tribe.

It is, of course, a matter of biblical exegesis, if not dogmatism, to distinguish real history from myth and revelation in these horrifying events, and I cannot tackle that here. The fact, however, remains that the core of all fundamentalisms is absolutely the same - those few Goats and Serbs that still have some sense left have learned this lesson - not to mention the same style of execution. No, not, of course, think of me as some vulgar atheist. These aspects of monotheism in no way exhaust the religious experience. But that fundamentalism is a cancer of sorts, a monotheism gone wild, that, just like cancer, feeds on its own body, is for me beyond doubt. We cannot reconcile fundamentalism, but we can always try to look for the liberating aspects, if there be any, in the religious themselves.

This is a completely different kind of reconciliation from the one the politicians are suggesting, especially, for example, in today's Croatia. According to them, my Azra, who was repeatedly raped in a special rape concentration camp in Bosnia, should make peace with those who did that to her, and especially with those

by whose order it was done, so that those gentlemen would not have to go to The Hague, which could be an inconvenience for them. *Anna's* remission should spare them the embarrassment.

No, *Anna's* reading of the ancient Bosnian fable is something quite different from that politico-ideological concept of reconciliation. She co-opts with the child that is itself a victim. Thus she turns the snake into a child. She is the only one who can do that: it can by no means be done by those who have brought about her misfortune.

It is quite clear in my play, however, that the world simply cannot suffer this kind of reconciliation. Such a reconciliation calls that very world into question. And it is our world, founded on violence.

So, *Anna* takes a different path. She knows, or I believe her to know, that the snake stands for the instinctive, dark, night side of man, and that without it no man cannot be a complete being. And why should any man be a complete being, every ideology and every fundamentalism start and take from man whatever they need: for example, by rewarding his killer instincts.

As for *Anna*, wants to give birth to

a man, not God, so as to, for instance, spare him the cross. I am sure that the fairy tale I had the good fortune to find enlightens her situation from within, and that she takes from it, i.e. from the text of it as recorded by V.S. Karadzic in the 19th century, what she needs. The fairy tale has no happy ending in my play, for in Bosnia, even fairy tales, or perhaps fairy tales in particular, do not work any more.

Misfortune lasts for long, while hope, in my play, only glimmers for a few seconds. It lives like some especially unstable chemical element. But it is here. A whole world, a completely different world, hinges on *Anna's* decision. Until her decision, the world was but a series of catastrophes that we see as separate and call wars, while the *Angel of History*, invoked here-in by the title, sees them as a single catastrophe. Walter Benjamin was surely not thinking of Bosnia when describing Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*. But that what the *Angel of History* sees so clearly, and what we, entangled in the events and distracted by all sorts of

cheap lust, miss, is Bosnia today, is for me beyond a shadow of doubt.

On the rains that pile up in before

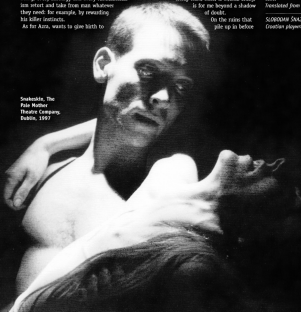
the *Angel*, *Anna* gives birth to the snake that was put into her, but then turns it into a child. A victim decides the fate of another victim, a convert of two victims the New Testament points to perhaps. The fairy tale tells of an age old experience, while over our heads, on legs of clay, across the demolished Mostar bridge, it runs into the future. Benjamin's *Angel of History* may be bringing good tidings at last. But then why does its face in Klee's famous painting show panic?

P.S. *Snake Skin* has been read and performed in many languages. The people who had something to do with it took what was closer to them and what they could not understand they handled in very different ways. As on a limas-paper, the differences between cultures, languages, mentalities, would then begin to show on the "body" of the performance. Then in this little text, read at a conference in Rome (Bionopia, 1997), I tried to describe some of the troubles and joys, my own after all, in dealing with this text.

Translated from the Croatian by Tomislav Džak

SLOBODAN ŠNAJDER is the most performed Croatian playwright, but in European theatres

Snakeskin, The Pale Mother
Theatre Company,
Dublin, 1997



FACTOR OF DISTURBANCE

Belgrade, July 9, 98

Dear editor,

I have much to my regret come to the conclusion that I have become too far removed from the theatre, and that it would be hard for me to write about its past, let alone about its future. Your invitation, for which I kindly thank You, has put me to a very useful test: now I finally knew that I have nothing more to say on the subject. Since I left the university (1991), I have been doing other things (editing the manuscripts of Danilo Kiš's uncollected writings and preparing an edition of his collected works). I now realize my knowledge has faded and my interest vanished. Sad, perhaps, but true.

Your magazine is fantastic and I warmly congratulate You. Once more I thank You for having remembered me. I wish You all the best.

Yours sincerely,
Mirjana Miočinović

Mirjana Miočinović, professor

Interviewed by
Goran Sergej Pristaš

Prolejši: To our invitation to write a test for this issue of *Prolejši* on the subject of *utopic and dystopic in the theatre*, you have answered that you have definitely reached the conclusion that you no longer have anything to say about the theatre, and that you are too far from it. Is it a question of being outside the theatrical context (in the sense of education, as well as following the current production), or of disappointment?

Mirjana Miočinović: A bit of everything. I would say, I was fortunate enough to have been able to follow the radical changes in the theatre, above all thanks to ECTET, in the sixties and the seventies, which led me to believe that certain antiquated forms, saved from oblivion only because of the incredible eclecticism, characteristic of the 20th century theatre, have finally come to an end. I myself have devoted much time to the study of





modern theories which aimed at drawing a clear dividing line between literature and theatre. Both experience and theory determined my gaze. I am literally incapable of watching a performance on the standard theatre premises, especially if the director in question does not know how to use even that space outside the schemes of imitation. I cannot bear the lighting that merely designates the time of day or night. I have no interest in actors who expose "the psychological basis of the character," and try to do it mostly sitting on a chair. I cannot stand the slowness and the monotony of the rhythm. I feel certain assistance towards the so-called "contemporary subjects," replaced overnight by peepshow "historical subjects", and all with the aim of canceling their thus far disastrous effects. And most of the performances that you can see in Belgrade at the moment belong to this type. I have no point of contact with such aesthetics and ethics whatsoever, and therefore have no business in such a theatre. The only thing I am interested in is the alternative scene. There are still traces of excitement of sorts there, there is still passion, you can still feel the creative intimacy of people. Belgrade, fortunately, has several small troupes of that kind, and I attend their performances regularly.

On the other hand, a theatre that would be "the sum total of the technical possibilities of its time," and therefore would not be old-fashioned, which is in a sense a natural inclination of every art, such a theatre is too expensive, not only for the countries of this area. It is no longer an art of serious social impact, the commercial effects of the performances are mostly next to nothing, and that is why nobody wants to invest in such art. When was the last time you have heard that a new theatre was built, whose spatial design would be in keeping with the spatial visions of Friedrich Kiesler, dating from the twenties (it was in Frkežić that I have read his text on the "Hanco of the theatre")? And I think that the problem of space is the crucial problem: unless it is transformed, I see no future for the theatre. For the real Copernican turn in this art happened through the change of view, imposed by the altered space of the play. Anyone who can still look at theatre scenes as if they were framed gears canvases of the classical perspective painting, who can accept the static quality of his/her own position of observation, he/she can still go to the theatre. Such are decreasing in number, and I am certainly not one of them.

As for theory, I believe the circle has been closed there as well. After the structuralists, semioticians, and semioticians have left the scene of theory, their contribution to the analysis and codifying of the language of theatre being enormous. I have not come across a single text that would (for me, at least) have the effect of revelation. And since this is the

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one sphere where I still try to be up to date, I believe I am right.

Frkežić: Your leaving the Faculty of Dramatic Arts was a kind of protest. How do you see that decision now, and has it significantly changed your professional life?

M. Mirošević: It was a protest, and from the moral point of view I am content I found strength, even courage, to do something like that. One has the right to be pleased with oneself sometimes, and I am. Professionally, however, I lost quite a lot. If you want to be a good professor, and I certainly tried to be one, which means that you are of use to students, you have to work hard. You acquire the habit of thinking in terms of teaching, i.e. in terms of your field, and think about it daily. Curiosity becomes a sort of professional duty. Once you stop this noble routine, this exercise of memory, this effort to remember, when your field of associations diminishes - regresses is inevitable. Of course, you still have certain lasting insights, they even come to the surface in a much purer form, because they are not muddled by a constant influx of new information. But that is not much of a comfort. In the last seven years, since I left the university, I have only written one text on the theatre, and that one drawing on the stock of my earlier

insights. However, I would not have written even that one, had it not been for the stimulus from without. I was invited, under bizarre circumstances, to a congress of psychoanalysis (!) in Strasbourg, the central theme of which was Freud's essay "Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse" of 1921. I spoke of the "power of suggestion of theatrical forms." But I would not have thought about that subject at all, would not have known I was capable of thinking and writing on it, were it not for that stimulus from without. These stimuli are getting even fewer, and they mean less and less to me. But just like the world was not any better because of my protest against the scandal of war, it will likewise not be any worse because I no longer write on the theatre.

Frakjlo: Your text "The Destruction of South Slavic Cultural Identity" is an epitaph of sorts to the possibility of complex and dynamic observing of the intersection of South Slavic cultures. Today, when it is difficult to think of preserving what was common in recent past, because of the power of the practice of the particular from the distant past, could there be room for thinking about separate cultural identities in certain contexts that would not drag the dead weight from the past behind them?

M. Miočević: I spoke of the destruction of "South Slavic cultural identity" in terms of a disaster. I believe that few share my opinion, for there are few who accept the term itself. I meant by it, in short, a harmonious interaction of the differences (national, religious, of custom) of the Slavic peoples among themselves, but also the influence exerted from without, that of the three great cultures - the Mediterranean, the Central European, and the Oriental one. The rest of the Slavic peoples lacked at least one of these influences, they lacked at least one of those columns. I thought the world had only begun to take note of that singularity, that we were slowly emerging from the shadow of cold, imperialist Slavdom. Of course, I also had in mind the practical side of that community for ourselves, since it extended the field of reception of every valuable work. I therefore had no choice but to see the barbaric destruction of that community and present complete indifference to it as a disaster. As for these "separate cultural identities," they are all that is allowed to exist at the moment, being created by the inexorable sockering of all "wild shoots" on the tree of a nation. The Serbian variant of this return to what was "particular in the distant past," in the discourse of akheuse birds and priests, is called "back to the roots". I have no interest in this identity (or "identity"). I cannot identify with it, not only because it is anachronistic, reductionist, conservative, but also because it is artificial, violent, and brutal. When you say

Of course, somebody could reply that I see everything through my own prism, so odious today, of feeling nostalgic about Yugoslavia, and therefore do not see any good in those national states, in that merry brotherhood of those of the same race and same religion, and that I see nothing good in the spheres of culture and ideas. That is true, I do not

"the dead weight of the past", I do not know what you are referring to, but it is clear that you do not mean something positive by it. As for me, when it comes to culture, I think it should be seen in a positive perspective, and that all those "separate cultural identities" will become monstrous, should it be neglected.

Frakjlo: The notion of multiculturalism and interculturalism went bust in this part of the world. This problem rears in certain national states, but in the form of intra-cultural considerations. Although many intellectuals gave up and withdrew from the public debate, the dynamics of socio-cultural change requires new intellectual protagonists or the comeback of the old ones. What is their present role in the ideation and contemplation of the socio-cultural structures in national states?

M. Miočević: Inclination towards isolationism, with clear signs of self-sufficiency, is the major characteristic of what could be called the official cultural policy. And in the narrowed, closed spaces, as a rule either deserts appear, or some unhealthy growth of strikingly similar, because homogeneous, flowers occur. The latter is the case of the environment I live in. Even the more prominent individuals, due to a zeal

hysteria of production, soon end in self-garody. Nobody plays a role that goes beyond personal interest there. Every difference, being a "factor of disturbance," is being systematically removed, pushed to the margin. And, paradoxical though it might seem, this "factor of disturbance" is not comprised of the intellectuals of younger generations, formed in the last decade, but of these, few and far between, whose education had a multicultural basis. Of course, somebody could reply that I see everything through my own prism, so odious today, of feeling nostalgic about Yugoslavia, and therefore do not see any good in those national states, in that merry brotherhood of those of the same race and same religion, and that I see nothing good in the spheres of culture and ideas. That is true, I do not. And I firmly believe that this backward programme would, among its partisans, have only those of slender intellectual means and little talent, and there is no such national culture that will, relying on their thinking, leave a more significant trace.

Frakjlo: In your book *The Powerless Observer* you mention the problem of the South Slavs having fallen in the esteem of other Slavs. Do you not think that all Slavs have in a way compromised their dignity during these so-called transitional changes?

M. Miočević: Their dignity became dubious much earlier. It is no credit to anyone to suffer for so long a totalitarian system, to partake, often willingly, of its preservation, to even ensure it and long for its return, which is a tendency that can be noted in certain Slavic countries, the one I have the misfortune to live in among them. The transition has only brought to the surface, made visible, all the sad anthropological consequences of a long-lasting destruction of human material, of its physical, moral and spiritual substance. Towards that world I feel a tragic medley of compassion and fear. People are set up to the role of free and responsible persons, and are therefore unhappy in the circumstances which demand those characteristics. And unhappy people can often be extremely dangerous. We were not even capable of making use of that "compensative advantage", which living under a "self" variant of totalitarianism offered us. There is something bizarre about us Slavs: it used to be called the "Slavic charm." I remember that in my youth, wherever abroad, in the West, I was pleased by that compliment, but I admit that to this day I have not grasped the essence of that "charm."

Frakjlo: The term transition is often used to mean and denote the reprogramming of the cultural connections, between the so-called Eastern and the so-called Western Europe. The mythology of transition and the mythology of culture once denoted Middle Europe, while today they are speeding eastwards, to the

areas where transitional forms were not frequent in history (in contrast to the revolutionary ones). Where does transition lead to?

M. Miodinović: I understand transition as an effort to pass from the sick into the healthy society. I do not, of course, see the healthy society as an example of happiness incarnate, but as a society in which one can daily perceive a painstaking effort to diminish the ontological "pain of existing", to live with the "right to happiness", to have insight into the causes of evil, and to have them under control (every effort to eradicate them is not only illusory, but also totalitarian). It is a long-lasting and painstaking toil, and not everybody is equally capable of and ready for it, not even those who are close in terms of civilization and mentality (I have in mind, for example, the differences between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, between Ukraine and Byelorussia, among the countries of this area). I pointed out some of the difficulties in answering your previous question. As for cultural interaction, it inevitably occurs, because the information flow has been made easy. But is slowly demystifies both cultural regimes, reveals the crisis in each of them, the horrendous voids in knowledge on both sides, especially on the Eastern one. It is not only difficult to fill these voids, but there is also very little sense in attempting to do that. During these last fifty years, the East has been deprived of the insight into a very interesting period in the history of ideas; for example, it comes to know certain books that have formed generations of intellectuals in the West only with great delay. It discovers its own great writers of the twenties and the thirties with no less a delay (several decades after the West), but it regards them now as classics with no serious immediate impact. The West itself has nothing of value to offer at the moment, it is entering the Alexandrian era, incommunicative (because it lacks ideas), closed in the hermetic language of specific sciences. Its once noble interest in wanting to know and save everything that was being clandestinely created in Eastern Europe, turned into purely commercial interest in goods, the value of which has to be raised in order to make use of what little curiosity remains.

Prkerić: You are presently working on an edition of the complete works of Danilo Kiš. His name is often mentioned in connection with the intimations of the disintegration of Yugoslavia. With the collected works present a

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new Danilo Kiš. Just as every cultural change emphasises a new aspect of his work, and indicates its inexhaustibility?

M. Miodinović: That work is over, and the collected works have been published in 1995 by BIGZ, on the 40th anniversary of Kiš's birth. The first ten books are in the form that Kiš himself gave them in 1983 (Works, Global: Zagreb, Prosveta; Belgrade). I have edited four new volumes: Five: Life, Literature: Poems, Essays: Warehouse. In 1990, as a separate edition, a book of interviews *The Bitter Taste of Experience* was published. The uncollected works were published in the volume *Warehouse*, that has already had two editions, and I expect a third one soon (there would have been one if the Serbian publishers were not so preoccupied with "written rooted in the national", as one of their leading proponents would put it). This book, which includes texts in "unfinished and imperfect" form, as Kiš himself would say (regarding that as characteristic of everything made by man). I see not only as important,

but also in many ways extraordinary. Because it meets Kiš's ideal of diversity, which is here not only thematic and stylistic, but also of genre. An unfinished novel, seven short stories, three essays, notes (some as if from a diary), sketch-

es, the material which enables one to reconstruct the creation of the *Encyclopedia of the Dead*, lists of subjects, all that, collected in one volume, becomes a new genre, or mega-genre, that Kiš, I believe, would not be indifferent to. Before they were collected in *Warehouse*, the stories were published in a separate volume entitled *Late and Early*. At least a small grasp of Croatian readers is familiar with this collection, because it was the first book to be published by Feral (in 1994, only a few months after the Belgrade edition). Feral Tribune can already be considered the exclusive publisher of Kiš's works in Croatia: last year, *The Bitter Taste of Experience* was published, and if we stick to some earlier agreements, Kiš's books will continue to be published, the publisher, of course, deciding on the sequence and frequency. In spite of all the anxiety I feel when I have to speak of Kiš using adjectives, I dare say that his work is inexhaustible, and that time is on its side. For, despite the fact that taste is being trivialised on a global scale, there are in Kiš's work of expression certain disturbing, even hard to bear, truths, something closely related to the coarse, symbolic, almost ideographic writing, that is (and will be ever more) used for conveying even the most complex ideas.

Prkerić: Has something replaced your interest for the theatre and theatre theory?

M. Miodinović: You see, I spent all those years working on Kiš. All the time I was trying to resist the temptation of interpretation and evaluation. My fear and anxiety helped me resist it. If I manage to overcome them, I will accept the invitation to take part in the congress on Kiš to be held next year in Halle. I would like to concentrate on the figures of style that effect the explosive condensation of meaning (ideas) as characteristic of Kiš's prose. I would also like to write a chronology of his life and work, as exact and as complete as possible.

But the desire to treat some of the subjects in my old field has not abandoned me completely. I only fear it would be some kind of theory for theory's sake. I am interested in clarification, I would almost say ahistorical clarification, and codifying of dramatic genres, so as to accommodate their (relatively) unchanging substance. And that would be all.

Translated from the Serbian by Lada Davidović

MIRJANA MIODINOVIC is a theoretician of the theatre and modern drama from Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Should Faust be saved?

Dževad Karahasan

Ancient Greek tragedy is a musical, scenic and dramatic whole that has to be experienced through listening, looking and reading to be completely aesthetically experienced and understood. This whole is of course not a mechanic summing up of musical, stage and dramatic-literary structures but these structures will for the present purpose be separated in order to ground a proposal of a possible dramatic reading.

Segments of musical structure (individual voices that can be heard in a tragedy) correspond to segments of stage structure. Stage area of the Greek theatre is organized in three segments, and these segments correspond to the voices heard in a tragedy. 1. The flat circle of the orchestra corresponds to the collective voice of the chorus that performs (that can be seen) in the orchestra. 2. To the individual voices of heroes corresponds the platform raised above the orchestra, *proskénion*, where the actors interpreting heroes perform (where they appear and can therefore be seen). Above the *proskénion* (at the roof level of the building for changing and make up called the *skênê*), a special theatrical apparatus called the *theologion* was used for staging appearances of the Olympian gods. The underworld gods did not appear in tragedy, their implicit presence being suggested by the altar (*timón*) placed at the centre of the orchestra, marking the place where sacrificial offerings to the dead and to the gods of the underworld were performed.

In the literary structure of ancient Greek tragedy, in the dramatic text received in the act of reading, three types of characters appear: that the individual voices and the three segments of the performing stage area belong to. These are the chorus (the collective voice, the orchestra), characters of heroes (individual voices, the *proskénion*), and the gods that in Aeschylus and Euripides mostly appear explicitly, and in Sophocles mediated by a seer (voice mediated by a resonator or a seer, scenic apparatus that raises the interpreter above the *proskénion*).

Dramatic interpretation, i.e. a reading of the whole that takes into consideration all the mentioned structures and all their elements, all interrelations of these structures and their elements, will have no trouble in recognising in Greek tragedy a model of the universe of Greek culture, i.e. a vision of the cosmos formulated in their respective ways and by their respective means by Greek philosophy, poetry, religion... It will recognize that the tragic theatre formulates, by means of music, drama and literature, the same universe formulated using other means by the Olympian religion and the secret cults (Orionism, Orphic, Dionysiac). Homer and Hesiod, Plato and Empedocles. For theatre is always a small scale model of the universe, an image of the cosmos created by a given culture.

Dramatic structure of the Greek theatre reflects the structure of the Greek cosmos: the

segments of the stage area, the voices that appear in tragedy, the characters whose voices and segments belong to, demonstrate forms of existence in the Greek universe just as their respective relations reflect the relations between various forms of existence in the universe. They also demonstrate various forms, i.e. degrees, of freedom. For that is what we are talking about.

In tragedy, as has been said, the chorus, heroes and gods appear. The chorus is made of people and the theatre shows them on the orchestra. Heroes are descendants of a god and a woman, condemned to dwell in the human world, in human shape and human company. In human society they occupy a prominent position, they are kings as a rule, which is why the *proskynesis* as a rite represents the porch of the royal palace (the orchestra as a rule being the square in front of the palace), but are nevertheless condemned to the human degree of freedom. This is the greatest degree possible in nature, the greatest that can be given a mortal being. Man has more freedom than a stone that does not grow, than a plant that grows but cannot move, than an animal that moves but cannot talk nor imagine... In a tragedy, the human degree of freedom is demonstrated by the chorus. The chorus warns heroes about the human way of being: the human confine, human mind, human abilities and the limits of human freedom. Statistically, the greatest number of speeches by the chorus in Greek tragedies refers thematically to this kind of warning.

Heroes have most freedom among men. They can do more, know more, and have more than other men. Only gods have more freedom than heroes, for they have absolute freedom (alongside immortality, absolute freedom is the single most important feature of the Hellenic gods, immortality being heavily emphasized only in Homer, while tragedians and philosophers put more emphasis on absolute freedom). But heroes strive to achieve the degree of freedom enjoyed by gods, or at least more than is possible for a being determined by human nature. For instance, they strive to gain complete control over their destiny, using will and reason, like Oedipus. Thereby they call into question the order of the universe, the structure of the cosmos, because the degree of freedom they aspire to gain is simply not possible on the level and in the form of existence assigned them (that heroes and men are condemned to). This is the reason heroes suffer punishment in tragedy and this is why modern man misunderstands Greek tragedy. The hero's guilt does not belong to the category of crime (for they do not break the laws of human society) but to the category of sin for they call into question the order of the cosmos and the structure of the universe.

The limits of freedom of any given being are determined by the way of existence of that being, which means by its position in the cosmos, by its role in the system of the universe, by that which makes his contribution to the existence and functioning of that system (if it be allowed to speak so mechanistically of metaphysical issues). The hero strives to cross the boundaries set by the order of the universe and therefore suffers punishment and meets his death or is humiliated. And this is why all tragedies end with the chorus and the promise of a new beginning. A play where the chorus would suffer could not be a tragedy but a modern drama trying to demonstrate that there is no sense or meaning because there is no universe, mechanic force and inorganic matter being the only reality.

All great cultural systems tied man's freedom to his place in the universe, determined the nature and limits of that freedom by means of human existence and recognized a threat to the universe in man's striving to cross the boundaries of freedom assigned him by the order of the cosmos. Islam has no theatre as the Western cultural tradition knows it because in Islam any form of realistic portrayal of human character is strictly forbidden. Which is why the limits of human freedom in the Islamic cultural system cannot be examined using the example of theatre, and it cannot therefore be shown in what way does this model of the universe punish man's heroic endeavour to gain unlimited freedom for himself. Literature, however, offers more than enough examples, especially mystic poetry. (One of the most exciting examples - the fate and work of one of the greatest mystics of the Islamic tradition, Ruzayn al-Bayhaqi al-Hallaj, I have myself tried to show in my novel *The Eastern Dawn*.) The Revelation itself, the foundation and origin of the Islamic concept of the universe, speaks of human freedom, of its nature, form and limits.

One example of man's heroic inclination to push the limits of his freedom beyond the limits of his existence mentioned in the Revelation is "Isra, the city of palaces on pillars" (the city also known as Harem). The Revelation says that this is the city of the people of Ad who were destroyed by a blowing wind "that turns to not everything it blows through." In the Revelation, the people of Ad are always mentioned together with the people of Tamud (as Sanaad) who were destroyed by a "mighty voice": the historical existence of both peoples has never been documented and they are, as far as I know, not mentioned in other Revelations and other cultural traditions.

The fate of the city of Harem is the subject of an extraordinary tale from *The Thousand and One Nights*. A poor headman, the poorest of all people, lost his camel in search of

Paradise is of another world and to relocate it would mean to destroy or change the structure of the universe (that consists of many worlds), which is not man's nature

them, he named the Desert for days and found himself in the city at the very heart of the desert, beautiful and rich beyond comparison with anything ever seen by human eyes or built by human hands - the city of streets paved with jewels, palaces built on pillars of jewels, walls made of gold, windows with diamond plates instead of glass... That was Irem, known in the Islamic tradition as the city of pillars, and the poor herdman, whose name escapes me, was the only man ever to have seen the city and been able to regain the human society.

The data regarding the city of Irem in the tale differs somewhat from those known to us from the Revelation: in the tale, Ad is not the name of the people, as in the Revelation, but of the ruler; the builder of the city is Shedad, "the son of Ad the elder," who has built the city in order to build a model of paradise on this Earth. He was punished on that account; the tale tells us, along with all those who had helped him in his foolish endeavour, firstly, because it is not for a man to build a paradise, and secondly, because paradise is not of this world. Paradise is of another world and to relocate it would mean to destroy or change the structure of the universe (that consists of many worlds), which is not man's nature. Man is a created, i.e. mortal, being, therefore belonging to but one of the many existing worlds.

Please not the sophisticated irony *The Thousand and One Nights* uses to tell the tale of the city of Irem. The city of Irem is the most beautiful and the most sumptuous work of human hands, and is discovered by the poorest of men - a herdman for hire. Built according to the designs of the most learned, yet discovered accidentally, during a search for lost camels. Built in order to amaze people and be continuously gazed upon as the earthly image of paradise, now hidden in the heart of the desert and invisible to men. The desert is a labyrinth for it is the perfect image of space in its geometrical literalness, and the most difficult of labyrinths at that, many an Islamic author agrees, because for this labyrinth there is no logical key. Every labyrinth has a way out and that way out can be reached logically. One gets out of some labyrinths by always taking the left turn; of others by always taking the right; this by taking two left turns and then a right one; that by taking three right turns and then a left one... And so on. There is always some numerical game, a play of ratios between the two components of a binary opposition (left - right) that is the arithmetic expression of the labyrinth, i.e. the principle of its construction and the key to its secret. Only the desert, of all possible labyrinths, has no logical solution, no arithmetic summary, no formula for the safe journey into the heart of the labyrinth and then out again. The city of

Irem, the largest human undertaking ever, cannot, therefore, be reached by means of a logical operation, key, or scheme, but by pure coincidence only. (The builders of the city of Irem find no comfort in the explanation that a coincidence is a logical law the logic of which is not understood by men. It brings no solace since Irem is precisely a human endeavour.) The city built to be the solution, the key to the secret (the secret of paradise), exists only in the heart of the labyrinth, i.e. only as a secret *par excellence*. The city built to be the image of eternity in this world, the very presence of eternity in human dwelling here (because paradise, let us remember, is by definition eternity, the moment that includes all time), is now absence, something that can be seen accidentally, but not found. Moreover, the city the splendour and magnificence of which should have made it exquisite, extraordinary, unique, has been seen again during the most everyday job of all - a herdman's search for his camels. And so on and so forth, forms and planes of irony could be deciphered on all the possible levels of analysis of this tale from *The Thousand and One Nights*.

Is the correspondence between this irony and the tragic irony so characteristic not only of Greek tragedy but of Greek culture as a whole clear when examined from the perspective of human freedom and its understanding in a given culture? Is the fate of Irem, the city of pillars, like that of a hero who would determine his own destiny by the use of reason, and so kills his father fleeing the danger of killing his father, marries his mother so as to avoid the danger of marrying his mother...? Is it obvious that these two views on human ambition to gain absolute freedom are grounded in the same kind of irony?

In the tale of Irem, the city of pillars, *The Thousand and One Nights* defines human freedom by storytelling means in exactly the same way as a group of free thinkers founded in Bonn (in the 10th century) called *The Brotherhood of Hermet Men* has defined it in philosophical terms. In one of its treatises, known as *A Debate Between Animals and Men*, perhaps the first work that can without further qualification be classified as an explicit philosophy of ecology, *The Brotherhood of Hermet Men* aim at proving that man is truly free when he acts according to his position in an ordered and complete universe. When he strives to push his freedom over the limits of that existential position, man begins to act against other beings, which means against the unity of the universe, and therefore indirectly against himself. Striving to gain more freedom for oneself than one is entitled to by one's position in the universe means to gain freedom for oneself at the expense of others (to turn one's freedom against others); striving to gain unlimited freedom means gaining freedom

without form and purpose; it means condemning oneself to formless existence, which consequently means attaining being free to do - Nothing.

That could be a way of paraphrasing the "philosophy of freedom" formulated in *A Debate Between Animals and Men* by a group of free thinkers *The Brotherhood of Hermet Men*. And I believe that could also be a way of understanding the views on human freedom as formulated by the European theatre of the Middle Ages.

Two of the most interesting forms of the medieval theatre of Western Europe, in terms of performing drama, the miracle play and the mystery play, seriously count on wonder used as an important dramatic tool, crucial for the denouement, (that one form is called the miracle play speaks for itself). Since the mystery play is so elaborate to render any relevant short paraphrase impossible (the text alone has some 30 000 lines of verse), and since it is determined by a spectacular stage performance that simply cannot be analysed here, my thesis will be illustrated using the example of the miracle play.

The dramatic form of the miracle play usually consists of three segments, the history is developed in three stages. Stage one, that might be called temptation, introduces the main character in a situation that presents perfectly the confines of human abilities. Regardless of whether it is a matter of external pressure, for instance a hero taken prisoner in a war (like in *The Miracle of St. Nicholas* by an unknown author), or of the inner drive of the hero, for example the desire for unlimited power and riches (like in the case of Theophilus, the hero of *The Miracle of Theophilus* by the French troubadour Rutebeuf) - regardless of whether it is a matter of external pressure or the hero's inner drive, the first stage in the plot development of a miracle play presents the discrepancy between the hero's strongest desire and his human capacities. In the former case this desire is forced upon the hero from the outside - by being captured in the Crusade by a Muslim army - and in that case is no more than a purely mechanic change of a life situation; in the latter, the desire comes from within, from the hero's character, as they would say today. In any case, the hero cannot make his strongest desire come true by means of "natural" human abilities: the wanted cannot escape from the Muslim captivity nor can the ambitious Theophilus escape unlimited power and riches for himself. This is why the first stage in the plot development of the miracle play is temptation: the hero is being tempted (as Christian saints were tempted) because he is brought into a situation that shows clearly the insufficiency of his own power to achieve what he strives for so much. Temptation the

hero undergoes in the first stage of dramatic plot articulates in terms of drama "the true disposition" of the hero: to achieve his goal, which he cannot attain by his human power, he turns to a metaphysical force for help. If he is "originally good," like the captured crusader of *The Miracle of St. Nicholas*, he turns to the metaphysical Good that guards the order of the universe, and if he is "originally evil," like the wretched Theophilus, he turns to the metaphysical Evil that perpetually endangers this order (as, like Theophilus, he sells his soul to the devil and thus provides Goethe with an interesting dramatic motif). Because of this, the second stage of plot development of the miracle play should be defined as convention. In this stage, man turns to what is beyond the limits of his freedom, to the powers or the forms of existence that themselves define man's abilities, his freedom and form of existence.

The third stage in the plot development of the miracle play introduces a saint (for example, St. Nicholas), usually Virgin Mary. The holy being saves the hero by means of a direct intervention into this world. If the hero is good, if he has asked the saint for help in prayer, he saves him, say, from captivity. If he did evil, if he has sold his soul to the devil for riches and earthly power, Virgin Mary saves him (e.g. Theophilus) because all souls worth saving must be taken from the devil. Thus the third stage in the plot development of the miracle play might be called salvation, always brought about dramatically as a miracle (hence the name of the form).

According to the theological definition a miracle is a manifestation of the higher form of existence in the lower. The fundamental Christian miracle is Jesus Christ - man with divine qualities or God manifest in the human body. After that all miracles that are possible and take place are but reflections of this fundamental miracle. Such miracles are the blossoming stone or the speaking bird, the dry bush that suddenly becomes full of flowers, as is a mystery play, or the water that springs from a dry stone, as is a miracle play. In any case, a miracle is the work of the metaphysical force that has founded the order of the universe and it cannot be effected by man. He can only ardently wish and pray for it.

But only a miracle, the miracle play teaches us, can make man's dream of freedom come true completely, that is, bring about that which man longs for in the liminal situations of his life. And such a miracle, the miracle play proceeds, is brought about by praying to the metaphysical force of good, i.e. respecting the cosmic order these forces guard. Striving to gain the dreamed degree of freedom without praying to the forces of good equals selling the soul to the devil. If we try to gain the degree of freedom we dream

about, instead of waiting for it to be given us miraculously, we become as Theophilus. We become Faust.

The motif of Faust compresses almost every question of man's freedom into itself, hence texts such as this one. Faust is no doubt the figure that more than any other comprises the symbolic series of man's present state, thus symbolising the modern man. Faust is, no doubt the truest literary expression of man's heroic dream of complete freedom, of the degree of freedom not determined by man's form of existence, and therefore not determined by the fact that we are certain to die. But who is Faust and what is he like?

The answer to that question is the answer to the question of our freedom today and the ways in which we see it. In a culture that has no common vision of the universe, the most widely accepted one being that of the universe as inorganic matter that expands under mechanic pressure, man's freedom is not limited by his position in the ordered universe (this being the original meaning of the term universe). It depends on Faust's disposition, for he is no doubt our symbolic figure, whether we shall use this unlimited freedom at the expense of other beings, as the Brotherhood of Honest Men feared in ancient Bana, or for our benefit and that of the other beings we share this universe with. But what benefit, if the universe really be inorganic matter? What is Faust like, i.e. what is our freedom like?

As is known, Faust was damned until Lentz (Theophilus differs from Faust precisely because he had repented and thus deserved to be saved by Virgin Mary). Lessing, taking the rationalist belief that God is the all-encompassing Reason seriously, proposed that Faust be saved for God surely would not condemn striving for knowledge. Thus, Goethe's Faust is the first saved Faust in the European tradition. Saved because Goethe believed that by turning a swamp into fertile land one objectively does Good.

In the meantime, we have, however, discovered that we Fausts do not use our freedom to do good. Not even unto the inorganic cosmos we have condemned ourselves to. We have learned to make a lot of things, but all our knowledge cannot produce but one of the primal elements. Not water, not air, not earth, not even fire. None of the primal elements that all cosmoses consist of, from that of Empedocles to our inorganic one. And yet these elements are what we call our freedom.

Should Faust be saved?

Translated by Tomislav Brlek

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We have learned to make a lot of things, but all our knowledge cannot produce but one of the primal elements. Not water, not air, not earth, not even fire

The Persians



The Question of Culture¹

Peter Sellars



Anything in life that occurs, occurs through dialogue and not through monologue, which is indeed our very point when we use words like multiculturalism. If anything that you are doing is not multi then it's not anything. Multi is the definition of being a human being and surviving on the planet, and not only surviving but doing better than that. Let's be more ambitious than survival. We can, I think, get beyond the cats and dogs phase of "What are we going to eat next?" If we're asking ourselves a larger question then we're into the question of culture. Even if we're thinking about our next meal, probably we're into the question of culture. Culture is by definition multiplicitous because every one of us as human beings are, by definition, multiplicitous and multifarious. When we talk about motivation, when we talk about intentionality, none of us really know our own motivations or our intentions; much less the motivations and intentions that we are imputing to others, because in fact we don't know ourselves at all. So to announce that I'm here to represent this or that culture is outrageous because all of us represent lots of cultures all the time.

We are now living in the generation of what Martin Luther King called "four hundred years of unpaid wages."² These wages are now coming due in this period. And the question is: what will the currency be that they're paid in? There's a lot of pain, anguish and violence behind our comfortable standard of living, and

we're shielded from that because we're in a materialistic culture where we've never asked where anything came from, or the cause of anything. All we want to know is the product.

There's been a lot in this current American and British phase of trying to prove that the arts are useful, saying, "Well the arts improve your critical skills, your thinking and your math scores." So we can justify teaching the arts because the kids do better in math which, I would add, is true. But that's a small part of the picture because what happens in the kids do better in life not just math: they're equipped to live. Otherwise, out of these schools, we're producing massive numbers of people who are simply not equipped for life. They're technocrats and they have created the nightmare social and political policies that we now have of giant structures in this society and a giant prioritization of funding that does not serve the society. In fact that has been a disaster. In the world's largest democracies we're now in the midst of a situation where the governments themselves have run out of ideas, have run out of steam, are in a state of paralysis. No leader has more than one or two per cent as nobody can make a bold move. We're in the triumph of the bureaucracy and the government is, if not the enemy, the irrelevant mistake.

Our art institutions are in fact producing the same thing: a whole bunch of things that didn't need to be done. Mostly what we're

1 Adapted from a lecture given at the Fourth Tils Conference, "Reflections on the Human Face," held in Lisbon, 13-15 November 1996. The conference's three major themes were Multiculturalism in the Arts and Society, New Technologies in Arts Education, and Current Developments in Arts Education. The complete version will be published in a book edited by

Dr. Maria M. Delgado. We would like to thank to Ms. Delgado and to Mr. Sellars' assistant Kevin Higa.

2 For further details see *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Speeches and Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (New York: HarperCollins, 1986).

teaching our students to do is perform for their grandparents. Who needed to know any of those things? Are those things helping? Who are those things helping? What are they learning when they are learning those techniques? Techniques that basically our generation failed with. Instead of starting our teaching with our presumed success to impress our students, I think it would be far more effective to start with our failure, the failure of our generation to communicate effectively in a society. The fact that the arts are totally marginalized in our societies is a demonstration of the failure of our generation. We've failed to get through, we've failed to connect our self-absorption, our smug self-satisfaction, and created a complete crisis in which the art that we practice is likely to be wiped off the face of the earth. If the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden has difficulty getting through a season because they don't have the funding, that's pretty serious. Right now the big companies that you imagine will be here forever, won't.

I'm coming from the United States of America and, as always, I'm proud to report that we're in the forefront of so many important moves. Just as we pass our laws to attack immigrants, I'm pleased to see that within a year or two Europe is able to follow suit. Just as we tear apart our healthcare system, just as we tear apart the very social fabric that creates a society, I'm happy to see that Europe is doing its best to keep up. So I come to you as an American very pleased and honored to talk here in Europe simply because I'm coming from where these things have been enacted. This is not some dystopian nightmare future, this is the present. Right now in Los Angeles where I live, the board of supervisors of Los Angeles County voted to shut twenty-seven hospitals last year, voted to shut seventy-five parks, voted to shut libraries, and in the same time has prioritized the building of new prisons. We're spending five billion dollars in the next four years in the state of California to build new prisons. We're spending thirty-five billion dollars a year to keep the existing prisons going. Our "three strikes and you're out" law means the third time you're arrested you're put in prison for life, for things like stealing cookies. We're willing to spend thirty-five thousand dollars a year keeping a twenty-year-old young black man in prison for the rest of his life. We're not willing to spend three thousand dollars a year on his education. The same law, which is now being applied all over the country, removed the education system and even body building equipment from prisons. So you are in prison for life but you cannot get an education there. You can exercise neither your mind nor your body. This is the social priority. We don't have enough money to keep a hospital or a school open, but we do have enough money to construct five billion dollars of new prisons. It's a



I do feel very, very happy to be alive at a moment where almost for the first time in the century, in the West, art is actually necessary. The social collapse is so extreme, the political collapse is so extreme that actually people do need ways to communicate

society where the prison is the priority over the school. Now a prison is a great image for a society because, as we know, in art everything is not just a reality, it's also a metaphor. And it's that metaphor which I wanted to just talk about for a moment.

I do feel very, very happy to be alive at a moment where almost for the first time in the century, in the West, art is actually necessary. The social collapse is so extreme, the political collapse is so extreme that actually people do need ways to communicate. People do not know how to articulate what they are now feeling in this society. The absence of articulation is what creates violence. If you can't express something, or if your voice is unheard, you of course resort to violence. The ability to move against violence is the ability to create forms of expression, where nobody has to be killed in order to say something.

Now I come from a city, Los Angeles, where we had an uprising in 1992. I know what it is

for people to set fire to their own city: a gesture that Antonin Artaud would call "signalling through the flames".² It's comparable to the Buddhist monks protesting the Vietnam War, who immolated themselves as an urgent signal that something needs to be done. Most of our cities are in flames anyway; you just can't see them, but Elijah could. You have to look with the eyes of a great prophet and suddenly you see a ring of flame around you. Can you sense those flames? Art, of course, is the ability to articulate that which is invisible, because that which is invisible is more present than that which is visible. Those flames are more present than anything else, but how many people can see them, can touch them, can articulate their presence? That question of visionary prophetic engagement is what artists are here for. They're here to see the fire on the mountain, to see the ring of flames, to understand the flames that we're feeling.

I would stress that one of the things that I find so important and one of the reasons I make all of these open about contemporary events is because of the presence of CNN, our current media. We have not lived through our own lifetime. We do not know the events that have taken place during our lifetime because they're presented to us, if and when they're presented to us, in this supposedly objective, impersonal way. "Three thousand people died in India in a plane crash," the man or woman reading the news shuffles the papers and then they're onto the next item. What has been erased is the emotional power of the events of our own lives, because television and the media announce they present it objectively. The minute anyone tells you they're objective, watch out: that's a dangerous person. No human being is objective; that's built into the system. There is not one objective human being on the face of the earth. Another reason why I think the arts need to play a larger role in public life, is to emphasize that there is no such thing as objectivity. Once and for all let's get that clear. In fact this pretend objectivity has only served to obscure the political realities that surround us - people's real choices in life, where they could make a difference, where there are structural things that could be altered. It's also exaggerated this sense that it's not worth voting, for the election last week in America we had the smallest turn out since 1926, because most people realized that it's not worth voting. There's nothing to vote for; there's nothing to participate in. That's the reason why I'm advocating the arts as pure activism, pure participation. If Picasso's working on a painting and these needs to be some red in the upper left hand corner, he doesn't write a letter to the editor of the newspaper.

² See Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 78.

he doesn't call his mother and complain, he doesn't sit in the corner of the bar and get drunk with his friends; you take some red paint, you squeeze it out, you pick up a brush, you put it in the red paint and you go and put red paint where there is some red paint missing.

Our task in the arts is to find something that needs to be done and do it. It is pure activism. It is giving people permission to take back their own society, their own lifetimes, their own lifetimes, not as spectators but as actively engaged participants. This is one of the big crises that so much arts education of the last two generations has been about, as Ananda Coomaraswamy would say, appreciation being more important than experience.⁴ In fact the art training that has been about appreciation has almost killed the arts. Most art making activity that gets grant money has almost killed the arts. What's so fabulous about the arts is they survive anyway in some underground form where Bushraev couldn't touch them. The forces of a giant monarchy and bureaucracy, like so much of education, the art world and government, simply says, "I am going to keep my job no matter what," so policy is put forward that does not perpetuate the art, it perpetuates the institutions. Right now we're saving our institutions and killing the art form. Like our governments, we'll be left with just big institutions that aren't serving a purpose.

Hence my wish to get active, this grass roots energy that says that a single human being is immense not small. The media world tells you that you're just one small insignificant person, and anything you thought is your problem, you're a pathological exception. Art is about a pathological exception like Vincent Van Gogh expressing himself and then a whole bunch of other pathological people saying, "Oh my God, that's the most beautiful thing I ever saw," and then beginning to notice that each one of us is a pathological exception. If the twentieth century has taught us nothing else, it is that mass culture is a contradiction in terms. Not one of us is a mass. Nobody is a mass. Everybody is unique. You are the only person who can possibly bring what you're bringing into the world. You are not replaceable. There is nobody who duplicates you in any way. And that is powerful. That is the empowerment that first comes out of our art programs, where a single human being feels their immensity, and where we understand that one thing created by somebody in isolation or with a small group of friends turns out, four centuries later, to be kind of important. What's

The Persians



At the end of your life, on the day of judgement, will you be able to say, "I sold eight billion tubes of toothpaste," or will you be able to say, "For a few minutes I brought a little more justice into the world?"

so beautiful is that art goes against the terror of numbers that this century has introduced, where everything must be quantifiable and the biggest numbers are the most important. We know McDonalds has served more hamburgers than anyone else ever, but if you are confusing that with cooking we do have a problem. The numbers aren't what's important. Think of two people: one is whoever is on the cover of *Newsweek* this week, and the other is a Tibetan monk in a cave in the Himalayas praying for world peace. Who is doing more in the world?

Art is about elevating the power of prayer. It's understanding that prayer does change things, does change lives and is the most powerful thing we know. It's a lot more powerful than the people who have armies, and the people who have giant marketing plans. At the end of your life, on the day of judgement, will you be able to say, "I sold eight billion tubes of toothpaste," or will you be able to say, "For a few minutes I brought a little more justice into the world?"

The subject of justice is what I want to get at, because finally right now in America most people have to vote to decide "Do we want art?" and the answer is "No, we don't need it, thank you, take it away." So Congress next year is going to shut down the National

Endowment for the Arts. This means that officially there will be no federal government money for the arts in the United States of America as of next year. Now we're talking about artistic survival. How will artists survive? The message now being given to artists in America is: "If you are an artist, get a day job." This is not such a bad idea. The only problem that I tend to find with art turns out to be artists, who are naive, selfish, obnoxious, and feel the world owes them a living. They are, by and large, a really annoying group of people.

When Bernardine Johnson Reagan was asked a few months ago what she thought about the crisis in the NEA and the crisis in the arts, Bernice calmly said, "What crisis?" She remarked that it's going to be a sad period because we are going to lose a lot of institutions that we loved, but at the same time maybe artists will begin to identify with people who've been under attack for a long time, people for whom being under attack is not a recent development. They might begin to notice what the other side of the street looks like, and they might actually have to include subject matter in their work.

We've been in a terrible period where Herbert Read announced that art begins where function ends.⁵ So anything that had no function was elevated as art and anything that you could use, like a pot, was called a craft, particularly because it was made by women and wasn't signed by anyone. If they didn't have a giant ego problem, it can't be art: I'm reminded of this great story of Coomaraswamy who was the first great master of Asian art in the Americas; one of those great Ghandi figures, educated partially in Oxford, partially in India, who could teach one world about the other. He presented an exhibit of a Chinese painting in Boston in the 1930s, and he wrote this beautiful thing at the beginning of the catalogue where he said that to the Oriental the Western conception of art is a little strange. It's as if a traveller hiding in the mountains comes to a place where the path forks in two directions and there's a sign that points with an arrow that says what's this way, and another arrow that says what's that way. The traveller looking at the sign immediately asks, "Whose was it made and who painted it?" He then proceeds to cut it down and take it home and put it over the mantelpiece in his home and say, "I have some art here," ignoring the fact that it's no longer functional.⁶

What I think is so exciting right now is, that as art is under attack all over the world, we are going to have to demonstrate that we are functional: we're going to have to demon-

⁴ For further details see Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (New York: Dover, 1956).

⁵ This is discussed at length by Read in the following texts: Herbert Read, *Art and Society* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947); Herbert Read, *Art and Industry: The Principles of Industrial Design* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935).

⁶ This is also discussed in the fourth chapter of Coomaraswamy's *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*, pp. 89-100.



state that we add something to people's lives; we're going to have to demonstrate that we're not a luxury, decorative item but that we're essential and that we're dealing with deep issues of survival. It's not a question of "Oh, it would be nice to have this. Oh well, today I don't feel like an extra dessert, so no art." Art is not the dessert part of your menu, it's the protein. It's not what comes after, it's what comes first. Art is the capacity to create a vocabulary where communication can take place across different people. Every single human being is different: nobody who you meet can you know anything about, so how will you communicate with them? What language will you use? Until that communication, those lines are open, until there is first a cultural life, there can be no economic, political or social life. In America we made the world safe for business, and now it's a really bad business climate. You can't do business in a place where the society is collapsing.

In the arts we can offer the society what the society needs and can't get through political channels, what people need and they can't get through economic channels. These questions of identity are what enable people to move forward in their lives and define points of contact with others. Without that every one of us is powerless.

So what I'm talking about now is a question of civil rights instead of public relations. What does it take not to say the smooth political thing that smooths over everything. What does it take to go into the heart of the problem. What does it take to be there present with the crisis, to live through the crisis and create a way of sharing that courageous experience with other people that permits them to engage their own act of crisis.

I will end with two little things. When I talk about justice I talk about this need for justice that people feel. When there's no justice around you, you can feel it. There's this beautiful, great Vietnamese epic from the 1820s, *The Tale of Kieu*.⁷ The heroine, a young woman named Kieu, is being addressed by a young man who wants to have sexual relations,

We're going to have to demonstrate that we're not a luxury, decorative item but that we're essential and that we're dealing with deep issues of survival

and he's really hot and anxious for quick action. *Let everybody in this world: Let's have something fast now.* His reply to him is about the difference between a one right stand and a lifetime commitment. In the arts we're talking about a lifetime commitment. In the arts we're not talking about instant results. We're not talking about anything that's going to appear in the next twenty-five minutes. We're talking about spending your lifetime working. He finds her little pin that she dropped on the ground and that's his excuse to go see her and say, "I found your pin." Mozart uses that one. And what she says to this hot young man is: "Thank-you for returning what I lost. A pin is not worth much, but beyond price is a man's sense of what is right and wrong." Where does that sense come from that has no price? What activates that sense?

We're sitting on top of the one thing that the world needs and we're wasting it day after day after day. We have not begun to release the power, beauty, grandeur, hope, courage and danger that is present in the making of art. We are sitting on it. It will only be released when things get so bad that people have no choice but to take it out and use it, because there's nothing else left to work with. After people have exhausted every other option, they'll notice that the solution was always here. I think of it like these windows that you see

which have an axe in them, and it says "In case of emergency, break glass." I would suggest we're at the time where it's appropriate to break the glass. Reach in, let a little blood flow off of your knuckles, because it's not a bad thing to mix a little blood in your paints. It's not a bad thing to let the art be part of your blood stream and let your blood stream be part of your art.

This question of art making practice with blood comes to me because I've just spent the last week in Utah, in Bryce Canyon, in Zion National Park, in these incredible places. Then you realize that most art is made by people trapped in cities, and most people are looking at man's creation and not God's creation everyday. They don't get that there's something much bigger going on with every sunrise and every sunset. It's not about an accumulation of objects. In fact the objects are no big deal: they'll always be here, and if they're not what a relief! Get them out of the way!

Most societies on the face of the earth have not accumulated objects. In Africa a work of art is a comb and it's carved for you by somebody who loves you. So every time you comb your hair you have the presence of an ancestor in the handle of your comb. You're reminded that your ancestors are with you, trying to whisper things to you everyday. You are reminded just by touching a comb that you are loved by someone and that you have to love them back. You're reminded of the invisible presence in your life every time you comb your hair. You're reminded, while you're combing your hair, that the only things that matter in your life are invisible, that everything you touch in your life reminds you of something that's really important. That sense that you get in traditional African society that everything you touch reminds you of something important, that's what we can now do as artists released from the need for self-importance, understanding that we're here in a service capacity, and it's important to learn how to serve.

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⁷ Sigmund D. *The Tale of Kieu: A Bilingual Edition of Truyen Kieu*, translated and annotated by Hsueh Tsao Hsing, with a historical essay by Alexander D. Woodside (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1960).

To the memory of Bob Elliott, Robert Marrese and Louis Marin and to Predrag Marčević, the utopian of "us"

UTOPIANISM FROM ORIENTATION

"Monsieur est Persan? Comment peut-on être Persan?" — Montesquieu

TO AGENCY:

(You are a Marxist/ utopian/ activist? How can one be a Marxist/ utopian/ activist? — PoMo translation)

WHAT ARE WE

"Bring your knowledge of disaster" — (telegram summoning Ch. Beard to Tōkyō after the great earthquake)

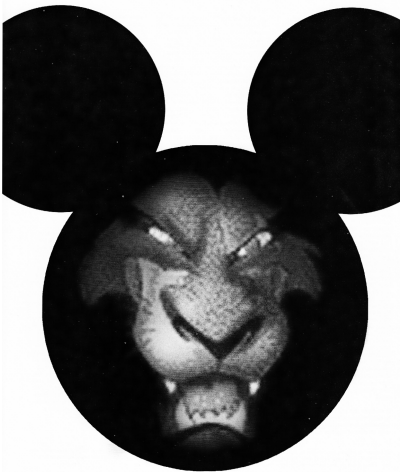
INTELLECTUALS UNDER

by Darko Suvin

POST-FORDISM TO DO? ¹

I My thanks go to Peter Fitting and Lyman L. Sargent for generously organizing a session devoted to discussing this, and to the latter for help with sources on hunger statistics. Also to Frank Mendelsohn and Tom Moylan for comments on a first draft, and to David McInerney for encouraging my interest in Nachemy. All translations from non-English titles in the Works Cited are mine. Since I did my survey on at least the definition aspect of utopia a quarter of century ago, there has come about a huge amount of secondary literature both directly and indirectly (methodologically) dealing with utopia — not only in English but also (to mention the richest European traditions) German, Italian, and French. It is well-known to most of us, but I wish today to exercise a creative forgetfulness in regard

to it. For, my project is to focus not so much on a "historically" self-enclosed tradition (which is in part operative as generic necessity and is good part constructed by us formalizing critics) as it is, primarily and perhaps right now even exclusively, to concentrate on the "vertical" interplay of utopian horizons, positions, and events with the "horizontal" experience of endangered living together in Post-Fordism. Nevertheless it ought to be apparent that my thinking is centrally stimulated and modified not only by the "indirect" masters such as Rastier, Hall, Jameson or Williams, but also by the "direct" critics from (say) Bauman to Zizek (I find it interesting that most of the first category have also committed some direct writing on utopia/vision).



O. "The Dark Now" (free after Bloch)

We literally do not want to be
what we are.

Kierkegaard

O.1. What is to be done by an intellectual wedded to utopianism in what Heidegger, suffering from the breakdown of the great French Revolution, called the *dürftige Zeit* (forgetting the misinterpretation by Heidegger, this can be rendered as penurious, indigent, shabby, needy, mean, paltry, poor time)? How do we find the proper "point of attack" to begin articulating the lay of this wretched land and the ways that might be found out of it? I shall start with a little known lecture by Foucault (discarded in Machree, "Material" 181-86), who poses the question: "What then is this process to which I belong? . . . and (what is more) [what is the thinker's] role in this process where he [sic] finds himself both an element and an actor." I interpret this to mean that, as opposed to the idealist Me, there is no subjectivity which does not essentially include belonging to what Sartre would call a situation, out of which his projects are elaborated. Foucault goes on to comment that such questioning no longer asks (or I would say, does not **only** ask) about "his belonging to a doctrine or to a tradition," but about "his belonging to a certain 'us' . . ." This "us." To further update Foucault, participants in a given cultural as well as politico-economical ensemble of synchronic relationships, "present" in all senses of that term. In the vein of Spinoza, all of us are *pass natura* rather than simply a disembodied gaze standing over and above it, and we are constantly interpolated by various necessities of our constitutive situation. The thinker's only alternative is whether to respond by going on to think to some purpose, of finding his freedom (as Hegel almost said) in facing the interpolating necessity, or to respond as Bostovsky's childishly resentful Underground Man by saying "just because of that, I won't respond." In other words, as the good old reactionary Chesterton once remarked, you may be free to draw a camel without humps, but then you'll find out that you haven't been free to draw a camel. . .

If we decide that a thinker or intellectual is, by definition, the one who responds, who is responsive and responsible, then I shall supplement my point of attack by attempting to build

upon a great ancestor who is a much less dubious role-model than Foucault, since he was not desperately reacting against the Communist Party, leaving phenomenology, and Marxism, but maintaining a fruitful dialog with them — Walter Benjamin. In the highly endangered *Jetset* of the 1930s he concluded that an intellectual work should be judged not only by what is its relation **toward** the relations of production but before all, by what is its position **within** them. It is in and because of this position, Benjamin held, that an intellectual producer is impelled by his professional or class interest to exercise solidarity with the producing workers. I shall go on to discuss how we must today (as Marx already did) add the relations of **consumption** as closing the circle of commodity fetishism and re-anchoring it, but also return to Benjamin's realistic central thrust: How does this hold for the writing, criticizing or indeed actualizing of utopia? Is it pragmatically **appropriate** or **pertinent** to the demands of the situation, is it **oriented** toward its real points, is it what Bloch called an *intending* or *making* thinking (*intendender Denken*—cf. also Machree, "Materialist" 145-46)?

O.2. But this general orientation is not enough. One of the major lessons of the "short 20th Century" has been, I feel, the dethroning of the nuclear, individualist or billiard-ball interior Self (I attempted an orientation in this field in "Polity"). This means raising the Subject into a problem and concomitantly the Body into a (sometimes fetishized) limit paper for and final line of defense against the alienation of labour, reification of people's mutual relationships, and hegemonically created passification. The Marxist and Nietzschean recognition that agential praxis is the end-all of understanding also spells the death-knell of the neat scientific division between looking subject and looked-at object.

What then is this particular Darko Suvin able to contribute as a valid stance under the stars in the not quite Blochian *Dunkles Jenseit*? What is he? Am I supposed to say of note to a gathering of people seriously (and usually jokingly) concerned with utopian ideas/ fictions/ colonies? Am I supposed to either further buttress or abandon my (infamous warring of the latter two, or my even more professionally transgressive refusal to underwrite utopia and SF, both dating back to MGSF? I assume I've been punished enough for the latter by the (so far as I can see) unanimous refusal of the SF people to get aboard a discussion of utopianism unless written by women after Charlotte

Perkins Gilman, and of the utopological people to even take into serious consideration what I wrote about More, Lucian, Swift, Blake, Percy Shelley, never mind the Frenchmen and Italians — in fact anything in the 120 pages between the theory and Wells, since it is in a book that has SF in its title; so that I can simply shrug my shoulders and say "transgressing the stars by which one lives in academe doesn't pay, and achieve *anima mundi*." Or am I to turn to what, to my mind, essential entries on the agenda of utopology today? — such as: — the already mentioned **Body**: — the already mentioned **Subject**, the multiply fragmented and malleable yet holistic Subject so overwhelming on today's collectivized horizons; — **trauma** that are not simply exponential take-offs from the past, as that breeds in experience much continuity in augmentation of profits, but whose point is to think the incorporation and reversal for the memory of losses and victims: frame-shifting, bifurcating **endangered futures**: — or finally (which is maybe the same in other words: but then all these entries are aspects of one another) **the Dead**, in Benjamin's sense that even they are not safe if the enemy goes on winning, if the break masquerading as extrapolation *swallows* our past. 2

But I've written about the Subject, the Body and its so-called emotions, and death in proportion of life in a number of other places, and connecting it with the utopian hub from which they spring and/or to which they tend demands a book I don't have money to write. So that I choose rather to incorporate Subject and Collective Bodies in an investigation, which I think of as the continuation of the kind I gave in my essay "Lucas, Horizon, and Orientation," namely that a fuller discussion demands prioritizing a focus on the oriented **agents** able or failing to dynamize any—but most clearly the utopian—locus against certain **barriers**. This is a discussion which is in our present, no doubt tainted, terms **political** in both the most pragmatic daily sense and yet only if this sense is infused with the classical sense within which we humans were rightly defined as not *politico*, living beings of the city-state, communal animals. This might also be the most useful way to define my place not only towards but also within the Post-Fordist Deluge, and to extend it to you as an articulation, a "polemical sketch of the salient activities and claims" (Rass 13), proposed for a debate we cannot live without.

2/ I think I wish I had space/time to develop here in an intellectual as the memory bump of society, I find obscure the phrase by Agnes Heller, born out of anti-utopian panic: "The history of the dead is dead history" (A Philosophy of History in Fragments,

Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, 436). In the contrary, all sense of history is *consequential* with the actuality or fear of death (of the past, but also of the future), the longing in "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem . . .".

1. Living in Fantasyland (Dystopia, also Fake Utopia and Anti- Utopia)

So long as there is still one beggar,
so long myth still goes on.

Benjamin

L.I. I shall enter into the thick of the matter by means of two apparently unrelated but I think revealing bits or bytes from the flood of information that so efficiently hides the convulsions of extremist reality transformations from us today. One is the estimate of what I take to be the most trustworthy international source in the mid-80s that some 40 million people die from hunger each year, which is equal to 300 jumbo jet crashes per day every day with total loss of lives; or (I don't know which is worse) the UN report that in 1986 "[r]eadily 800 million people do not get enough food, and about 500 million are chronically malnourished" (Duke-Sen *Hunger* 36 and *Human* 20; cf. also the too optimistic World Bank *Poverty*, the second in press reports according to which the ex-Moscowites in the Billie Jean Martin unsuccessfully used Disneyland not only for a holiday of her family in the parking lot but also for the emotional trauma her grandchildren, aged 5, 7, and 11, suffered when they were taken backstage and saw Mickey Mouse and the Lion King removing the heads of their costumes (*Gazette* C15 and "Reer"); I resist the temptation to linger at the Disney corporation's emblematic progress from mouse to lion in order to follow the usual picture).

Now, I very much doubt the starving hundreds of millions or the couple of billion people eking out a living, at the periphery of the world system or dawning down in the center of the affluent cities of the North, would have time for the Maty family's Disneyland trauma. They are absorbed by surviving the fallout from the civil and overt war waged by the big corporations, and which with poetic justice migrate from their "hot" feet also into the "Third World inside the metropolis," the creeping war in our slums so far best described in hip-hop and in the post-Duchian and post-Dickian dystopian SF of Piercy, Butler (Octavia, not Judith), Gibson, Spinrad or Cadigan. Nonetheless I submit to you there is a deep

subterranean bond between, on the one hand, the starving bellies and bacterial epidemics among the masses of the South, and on the other hand, the starving minds and brainwashing epidemics moulding all of us in the North a bond between misery and dragging, best incarnated by the AIDS pandemic, where the collapse of the bodies' immune system is an almost too pat allegory of Pollio capitalism. For the ideological Disneyfication (and I shall return to the fact that the Disney corporation is by now one of the biggest "vertical" monopolies in movies, media, and book publishing) is a drug of the brainwashing variety. What is perhaps worst—and we intellectuals should know why—is that this drug functions by channeling the imagination rather than by chemical stimulation or inhibition: it uses the brain's imaginative powers to create empathetic images which are a fake *Novum* or what Louis Marin called a degenerate utopia. As the old theologians knew, the corruption of the best creates the worst, preempting and preventing any radical *Novum* or utopia — the indispensable precondition for altering the lot of us. Maty's grandchildren as well as the millions upon millions of kids of (for ex.) **Salazar**

Bambay.

1.2. As all updates and fake utopianisms, Disneyfication is predicated upon alienated labour so that people crave satisfaction in "leisure time" consumption (Jewett). But a further turn of the screw specific of our times is that in a Deleuzian "society of the spectacle" each person that could be a citizen viewer is both cut off from the producing of (or in) the media and positioned within a mass of atomized fellow-viewers, where a dynamic "desire to consume . . . [is] the only permissible participation in the social process" (Bakhtin 36-37). The abiding political disempowerment is channelled into a rage for addictive consuming that shapes a collective unanimity where, paradoxically, the fake utopia is felt as personal. It has eaten into Ms. Maty's brain so deeply that she sobbed uncontrollably in court at the loss of "the happy feeling" she had known in Disneyland and on the Mickey Mouse Club TV show in the 1950s. This is, as Marin taught us precisely on the example of Disneyland, utopia eaten up by the very ideology which it was its original Moacan and Merrikan function to fictionally unveil — in order, I would add, to rob ideology of its absolutizing and indisputable power, in order to deliver it to the critique of practical reason. The slogans of this alienation are "comfort, affluence, consumption, unlimited scientific-technical progress, omnipotence

and good conscience, . . . values assumed by violence and exploitation appearing disguised as law and order."³

I shall not follow up here the whole subtle, sometimes perhaps overblown, rhetoric of Marin's book about neutralization etc.; it may be of interest to you if I report that in a discussion we had before his untimely death, he admitted that his basic approach was still too dependent as Engel's by now untenable split between utopia and science. For our present pressing purposes, I shall focus only on a few generalizable facts of Marin's astute dissection of Disneyland, whose features can be discerned best, I shall argue, if we see it in terms of dystopia masquerading as utopia. This argument comprises two points. First, Marin quite rightly seized on what I'd call **reproductive empathy**, the fact that "the Disneyland visitor is on the stage, as actor of the play being performed, caught by his role like the rat by the trap, and alienated into the ideological character he plays without knowing it. . . . Performing Disney's utopia, the visitor 'realizes' the ideology of the ruling class as the mythic legend of origins for the society in which he lives." (206-99) Marin thus reactualized the founding insight Benjamin reached looking at movies and advertising, that "the commercial glance into the heart of things . . . dematerializes the space for the free play of viewing" by abolishing any critical distance (SS 4/1: 131-23). Second, Disneyland — here functioning as a privileged, because pioneering, topologically accessible, and even mappable, *pers pers* totos of the capitalist and especially US adman brainwash — is a "degenerated utopia" in two reinforcing ways, which I shall label **transfer ideologizing** and **substitution commodifying** (the analogy to Freud's account of dreamwork as removal and condensation, *Verdrückung* and *Verschöbung*, is striking).

Transfer ideologizing, the first achievement of Disneyland is to perform a "Mickey Mouse" version of ideology: the continually reinforced empathizing immersion, the "thick," topologically and figuratively concrete, and seamless *laes* consciousness, injects the hegemonic bourgeois version of US history into people's neurons by twisting into a different semantics — thus "naturalizing" and neutralizing — these imaginative fields: **historical time** as the space of alternative choices; the **foreign/ers**; and the **natural world**. Marin does not focus much on historical time, except to suggest that it is turned into ideology, into the myth of technological progress (316 and 320-21). He does not

³ Marin 294; cf. also some shared observations on the representativity of Disneyland by Benoit-Lévy and by the Pollio architect Venturi, who however feels much more at home in L. I. and probably still the sweetest odors of the "pleasure industry," its rise in the world expositions and fairs, its induction of the dream-world of mass culture and affluence to fascism, as well as its connection with the related employee class

that produces information / entertainment / persuasion, see Walter Benjamin; cf. on Mickey Mouse as a "sign of the collective dream" the still much too optimistic first version of "The Work of Art . . ." SS 1: 402, and the excellent overview in Beck-Mann, esp. 30-96, 153-84, 161-17, and 162-17.

fully conceptualize either — Main proceeds rather by a kind of rhetorical mimicry of Disneyland alteration — how the foreign and nature are denied, how that same Social Darwinism turns them into the primitive, the savage, and the monstrous (321), but I think this can be followed by means of a number of his chosen fission analyses. This holds in particular for the discussion immediately following the spatial and performative “central axes” to Disneyland and dealing with the phantasmatic Fantasyland, which is the PR “sign of Disneyland, the trade-mark of the utopia itself . . . the privileged utopian locus of Disneyland” (305–06; I’m adapting these pages in the following account).

The very aptly named Fantasyland is constituted by personalized and impersonating images (themselves second-degree empathetic citations of Disney’s comics, cartoons, etc.). Reality becomes the double or twin of the image in Marin’s earlier and better—though not flashier—version of *Sacred/Inland’s* simulacra. (The great ancestor here was Philip Dick’s SF from the 1960s on.) This doubling in itself double: first, the image is turned into a material reality by figures of stone, plastic, plaster or rubber; but most emphatically and emphatically by human representations disguised into such fantasy characters. The representation (le *figurant*) has become an embodied, flesh-and-blood represented (le *figuré*) and signified — the unmaking of which as fake when faced with the no doubt sweet faces of Disney corporation’s tired employees then quite rightly shocked the Matsys. But second and symmetrically inverse, reality is transferred into image: insofar as the visitor is caught up in Disneyland, there is no other reality but that of the figure or representation into which (as Brecht would say) you creep in an act of psychic vampirism. This is also the proceeding of magic, which elevates its images to the ontological status of another, underlying reality (and it is logical that the Disney World NBA basketball team is the Orlando Magic). Any alternative non-narcissistic imaginary, imagination as consciousness of the possibility of non-dragged radical otherness or indeed simply as terrible possibility of shuffling in and out of myth (Mannoni), is being neutralized here: “while you believe you’re enjoying yourself, you’re absorbing the ideology needed for the reproduction of the relations of production. Historical reality is being concealed from you, it is camouflaged underneath a stylized and fascinating veridicality. . . . You’ve given a prefabricated dream: . . . a homogeneous unconscious (an incoherent nation), perfectly ideologized.” (Mike Duffenne, cited in Guattari 96–97)

As Marin established, Disneyland first neutralizes external reality by means of the car and

the dollars that get the spectator to enter it. But it then substitutes a transfigured reality produced by the hallucinatory channeling of desire in Fantasyland, which is itself a terror: “the violence enacted upon the imaginary by the phantasm of that Disneyland director. . . .” When “another” reality appears, it is “as the reality of the banalized, routine images of Walt Disney movies, poor signs of an imagination homogenized by the mass media.” This fake Other is a trap for desire, its caricatural collective image. Disneyland’s careful and most efficacious organization of desire installs the imprinted repetition of the familiar as the supreme good and demotes the radically different Other. I find it lamentable that as Matsys could not hold Disneyland accountable for transgressing this basic ideological contract with the brainwashed, for not policing its parking lot better, not sufficiently scrubbing that dragging is necessary for life in PaMo capitalism as gaspiterism, the inescapable obverse of Disneyland’s business coin. This allows the too immediate, destabilizing shock of the useful lifeworld violence and insecurity — a reality which the unanimous media make visible only for the relatively small or at best medium gaspiterism, from the holdup for the next fix to Saddam Hussein, while the arm merchants, the starves of hundreds of millions, and the draggers of billions of people remain invisible.

The second achievement of Disneyland is, however, a new twist on age-old ideology-managing and constitution of given images. The Golden Calix is capitalized in the psychic bloodstream as commodity. This pervasive upshot is introduced by “Main Street USA”: “commodities are significations and significations are commodities” (Marin 317). It is confirmed at the centre as “life is a permanent exchange and perpetual consuming” (319, Marin’s underlined). By giving an infantilized connotation of “security blanket” to images, which Debord famously defined as the final form of commodity fetishism (ch. 1), Disneyland produces constantly repeated demand to match the constantly recycled offer: it commodifies desire, and in particular the desire for signification or meaningfulness (cf. Attali 256 and passim, and Schickel). Walt Disney himself stated to *Parade* in 1972 his object was to sell happiness (cited at second hand in Dorfman 29). Disneyfication, then, certainly means the pursuit of happiness, twisted from its Jeffersonian origins to a permanent readiness for re-enchantered commodification: “the pursuit of happiness becomes a lifetime of shopping” (Lammis 48). The dynamic is sanctified engulfing into the pursuit of commodity is ideologically aligned as anthropomorphic animals who stand for various affects that make up this pursuit. The affects and stances are strictly confined to the petty-bourgeois “positive” range: so that,

roughly, Mickey introduces good cheer, the Lion King courage and persistence, etc. “Just try to get [things such as hunger, lack of shelter, cold or disease] past the turnstiles at Disneyland sometime!” (Dorfman 60) — shades of the Matsy family. This Disney infantilization marks and displaces a double rejection. First, of an active intervention into the real world which would make the pursuit of happiness collectively attainable: it is a debilitating day-dream which appeals to the same mechanism as empathizing performances and publicity (see Berger et al. 146–48). Second and obviously, it rejects any reality constitution of one’s desire, however shallow. While Disneyland is wedded to consumer dynamics, to an ever expanding market (Dorfman 202), it remains deeply insular to knowledge, which crucially includes an understanding of limits for any endeavor — and in particular of the final personal limit of death. Disneyfication denies death (see Benjamin, GS V: 121), Snow White — and so many other cartoon villains, for ex. *One* — must always be magically resuscitated: “Life is dream without death. . . knowledge is dream as consumption and not production” (Dorfman 170–73 and cf. 193–204). It is thus a degenerate form of ideology in comparison to religion and other beliefs whose strategic object is to give meaning to death (cf. Susan Lewyns, ch. 5). While Disneyfication is thus a displacement in Freud’s sense, it is also more; and it might be more precisely identified as a shaping of affectual investment into commodifying — a metonymy of what Jameson has penetratingly discussed as the PaMo “consumption of the very process of consumption” (*Postmodernism* 276), say in TV.

1.3. So my first thesis submitted to your discussion is (as seems only proper for a Gramscian, see 164) double-pronged, epistemological and political. 1a: while I have little doubt that collective realities exist (see more in 1.4 below), it is dubious that empirical entities can be neatly disjoined from imaginary ones: in other words, it is dubious — though still perhaps not only useful but unavoidable for pedagogical purposes — that empirical or existent societies can be neatly disjoined from imaginary or non-existent ones. I’ll argue in a moment that there is no identification of any token or sample existent without an imaginary type which permits the identifier to recognize it as such, say the sample Mickey Mouse as type of “Disney’s comforting being” (*Geborgenheit*). 1b: we live today in dystopia as well as in anti-dystopia — perhaps because the dystopia is an anti-stopia, a deliberate project for subalternity. This was dimly adumbrated in the flash of horror (*Gewitterheit*) the fatherless Matsy family had at the backstage threatment.

UTOPIAE INSULAE FIGVRA



Is it only professional idiocy to conclude that we desperately need (at least to begin with) some semantic hygiene as to what we are speaking about? Is it only intellectualist expert doodling? Not, I firmly believe, if we are doing this as a link in an ongoing process culminating in action. If Rosa Luxemburg, in the midst of World War I, before the adman's efficiency, was possibly too optimistic in believing that "to speak the truth is already a revolution," we must inherit her optimism of knowledge and

will, and say that to articulate a categorical hygiene is the **precondition** for any salvational revolution. I do not therefore see any break in the continuity of my discussion if I immediately segue from politico-economic data and ideological emotions into epistemological discussions of the proper vocabulary and articulation we need in order to see sufficiently steadily the ground upon which we unstably stand, and to see it sufficiently whole — though I shall come back to the complex and indispensable

mediations and in particular to ourselves as (potential) intellectuals.

Allow me therefore a very brief and compressed epistemic reminder: All conscious thinking involves a subjunctive and imaginative component, imagining what would happen if something were other than the way it is (Ellis 1987). Even for the infant consciousness, **identifying** an object involves imagining how it could be manipulated: there is no "perceptual

consciousness" without imagination and subjectivity, that is, without an implied counter-factuality (cf. for ex. Paget 1928 and 1999). Conscious seeing, as opposed to staring, occurs only when we attend to (look for) the object on which we are to focus, that is, when we ask "Is my imaginative/ry type instantiated by the tokens in my visual field right now?" Is it, the imaginative act precedes the perceptual one (Russett 1986): there is no formalization of questions that does not spring from feelings of desire or interest (Lüthi 1973), which entail imagination. It is in this sense which is being captured and channelled into infantilism by Disneyland. And I propose we can make sense of this by seeing it with Marin as a fake utopia, which we according to our interests decipher as a dystopia and therefore also as anti-utopia.

Map-making and naming are after all the founding gestures, the seed or root (etymon) of any utopian venture — narrativized in fiction, empirically located in colonies. Baudrillard's consciously outrageous claim that the map precedes the territory is quite over-sold, though up to a point salutary as a goal in thinking: for no territory can be constituted on territory (instead of a lot of terrain) unless a drawn and/or verbal map delimits it on such. While obviously (as is neatly proved by contraries in an ironic story by Borges) the map is not the territory, it is both a model of the territory and the territory seen through a grid of epistemic conventions, seen as an overview instead of as a bodily experience or indeed a buzzing confusion of senseless phenomena.

I.A. Thus, what is anti-utopia? And what dystopia? They are incompletely stabilized neologisms, but to use them as efficient cognitive tools we should try to stabilize them for collective manipulation. Some years ago I made such a disambiguating proposal to my student Ron Zajac and it is briefly sketched in his M.A. (2). I note with pleasure that it tallies with Lyman Sargent's (1988), though his definition insists on objectively "non-existent societies" and I've mentioned that I reject commonsense objectivism — see Savin, "Cognitive". At Zajac and I decided to call "dystopia" a community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and relationships between its individuals are organized in a significantly less perfect way than in the author's community. Accepting the objection (by Wittgenstein or Brecht) that nothing is seen without being "seen as X" because it is "seen from the stance X." I'd today add to my original M&S-derived, somewhat formalist or objectivist definition something like "significantly less perfect, as seen by a representative of a disoriented social class or fraction, whose value-system defines 'perfection'." As a secondary recapitulation, there is a special

case of a sociopolitically different local which finally also turns out to be a dystopia, but which is explicitly designed to refute a fictional and/or otherwise imagined utopia: and I hope we were following the best of the English language when we proposed to call it "anti-utopia," evaluating the unneconomial use of this term as a synonym of dystopia. "Anti-utopia" thus designates a pretended utopia, a community whose hegemonic principles pretend to its being more perfectly organized than any thinkable alternative, while our representative "camera eye" and value-monger finds out it is significantly *less* perfect than an alternative. Finally, it becomes logically inescapable to invent a name for those dystopias which are also anti-utopias, but in order not to abet the Baudrillardian confusion of languages around us, I shall simply call it the "simple" dystopia.

Since we have here a somewhat complex state of affairs, I believe it might be clarified by a minimal amount of formalization in terms of interstitial Possible Worlds. Let me call PW_0 the describer's and evaluator's empirical world (or better — the dominant ideas or encyclopedia thereof), and PW_1 the imaginative Other (utopian/dystopian) world. In that case, the interset of "simple" dystopia (that is, of that cluster of dystopias which is not also anti-utopia, say Pöhl-Eisenbach's *Space Merchants* or other "new maps of hell") is PW_1 , and what is "inter" or shared here are some strategically central tendencies of the author's empirical world. The interset or referential (Ico would say inferential) foil of anti-utopia, however, is PW_0 ; a non-empirical PW intended to be significantly better than PW_0 but failing to be such:

(—)ANTI-UT.
DYSTOPIA!
(—)"SIMPLE" DYST.

"SIMPLE" DYSTOPIA: $PW_1 \longleftrightarrow PW_0$
ANTI-UTOPIA: $PW_{01} \longleftrightarrow PW_E$

The purpose of PW_1 is an *avert* warning against things going on as they do in the original empirical world PW_{01} , sometimes wedded to a hope that they may be changed — "if other will, but see it as I do" (Merris) — into a less dangerous and happier PW_{02} . The purpose of PW_{01} is an *avert* warning against a new PW , as a rule wedded to a hope that we can get rid of that novel delusion and return to the original PW_{00} . Seeing Disneyland — standing in for Post-Second — as a fake utopia *constituent* with (deciphered as) anti-utopia is a move analogous to those utopian/opponent of Bellamy who have Julian West waking up to the fact he was being hypnotized by an evil empire. Seeing Disneyland thus simultaneously as a dystopia powers us from regressive nostalgia for the good old days of (say) the 60s or

of the antifascist coalition, the lessons of which we must nonetheless savor if we are to have a chance of getting at any happier PW_{02} .

This little mental exercise does not at all claim to work out a full system of utopian sub-genres or loci. Still, I wish to add a further important caveat. I did begin by saying these distinctions are tricky. I've been arguing that there is strictly speaking *no objective "empirical world" out there without its simultaneously and co-constitutively "being seen as" such*, and indeed as such-and-such. (This doesn't at all mean "there's nothing out there" interacting with anybody's gaze at action, as the Pollo vulgaris, though not its best people, claimed: try jumping off a skyscraper without a parachute...) But I'd demand my operative distinction between empirical and utopian world by saying that there was—and is!—*a strong, ideologically dominant illusion* of such an empirical world, seen at one glance by God or asymptotically by Science or Mankind, in that modern/scientific which impinges deeply on and largely determines our experiential world. The distinction depends on the bourgeois or capitalist utopianism beginning with Jules Verne having denied that it is utopian and instead being predominantly "naturalized" — presenting the ideology of progress and Social Darwinism as natural (see M&S ch. 7 and both titles by Berber) and not needing explicit, ideologically foregrounded figuration. Up to—say—the 1950s-70s, the Pöhl-Eisenbach is rightly refused — because they did not need it — the status of genius with which Thomas More endowed his King Utopia: *cutting off* the ideal topology of Utopia from the experiential content. So Disneyland is imaginable before Freudism. Then, it was mainly oppositionists (socialist or anarchists on the left, reactionaries on the right, with some technocrats a la Skinner — and indeed much Wells — in between) who carried on with topologically and/or conceptually explicit, let me call them *ruptural* utopias.

It should be added that the dominant ideological horizon of anti-utopia is in any historical moment determined by opposition to the dominant idea/s of utopia, to the dominant imaginary PW_1 . In the Modernist "short 20th C" (Hobbes dates it c. 1917-73, thus underlining its crucial but probably not exclusive parallel with Leninism), this dominant idea was either some kind of socialist — usually perverted or pseudo-socialist — imaginative topology, or technocratic statism with few if any socialist tints. Thus, as a rule, only the "simple dystopian" horizon applied to high capitalism while the anti-utopian one applied to retting pseudo-socialism. It seems to me significant for the social class/es of intellectuals which articulated such anti-utopian that as any

rate the best examples thereof (for ex. the Holy Trinity of Jamiatin-Huxley-Gowell) subsumed both capitalist and Stalinist statism into its fold *FWG*, and yet did not envisage this resulting in a radically better *FWG*.

However, the unprecedented Post-Fordist mobilization and colonization of people's desires and of all the remaining non-capitalized spaces (making Huxley's *Plasas in Island* today possibly more important than *Brave New World*) now requires masked, infantile fantasies. In that light, Asada's playful proposition that our period should not be called mature at late but "infantile capitalism" (611) is quite correct if taken as a kind of infantilized, glibiose senescence which cannot mature further: the dark creature on three rather than four legs in the Sphinx's riddle. Desire, images, "culture" can no longer be divorced from economics: rather, it is their interpenetration which constitutes the new mode of production's *comag* strength, that is — source of major profits (and a counter-force can only be found in a *same* interpenetration). This has been brilliantly argued by Stuart Hall (for ex. 243), while Fredric Jameson has even remarked that "everything in our social life — from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself — can be said to have become 'cultural' in some original and as yet untheorized sense"

(*Postmodernism* 48) and developed this at length throughout that book. Culture began supplying authoritative frameworks and focal agency and meaning after "belief became polluted, like the air or the water" (de Certeau 147), so that orthodox religions (including scientism and liberalism) rightly devolved to just another, if more privileged sect — yet religiosity was more in demand than ever and physical and psychic indigence, Culture co-opted by capitalism is today as larger a fully distant sphere of activities but a colonization of the "service" or consumption-focused society in the twin guise of information and esthetics: information-intensive production is working time (the best example is biotechnology, whose output is information inscribed in living matter, so that the engineering involved is the processing at "reading" of this information), and "esthetic" consumption in leisure time (cf. *Mass Critique*, and Kroker et al. 55-58 and 540ff.). The new mythology of belief proceeds thus "camouflaged as facts, data and events" (de Certeau 151) — as "culture industry" images. An exemplary (bad) case of the latter

are the adulterated fables and fairy-tales of Disneyland.

Disneyland's first move is analogous to King Utopus's cutting off Utopia from the everyday continent: a spatial rapture (splendidly analyzed by Marin's account of the Disneyland layout). Yet this is only a mimicry, *not* not twice, which by means of its pervasive and insidious ideological continuity with the everyday hegemony functions as harbinger and accelerator of mega-corporate capitalism. At this point — more or less contemporaneous with the exhaustion of Leninist and Social-Democratic socialism, of the Welfare State — a new manner has appeared that must be understood as **topologically opposed but ecologically intensifying** — rather than oppositional as in the More to Morris canon. That it not only mimics a capitalist genre (the classical utopia, *FWG*) but it also appropriates a Vellian dynamic, invasive subversion of empirical reality (*FWG*). Furthermore, if we take the Disney enterprise as an allegorical exemplar, its pervasiveness is not only intrinsically total (in all fields of life) but also extensionally total (globally as none before (cf. Jameson's *Political*, but his whole work bears on this point): Disneyland's brainwash impartially and without discrimination (non olet) consumes of all social classes and in the whole Tripartite Communion world, including Europe and Japan. All of us live in a dynamically aggressive false utopia whose "degeneracy" we nonetheless absolutely have to — upon pain of brain rot — decipher as anti-utopia. This was most stimulatingly seen in Philip Dick's abjectly naive invading stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, whose present articulation merits a longer consideration — thus to my impetuous mind confirming that it is sterile to cut off "pure utopian life," texts from SF: I'd today go further and argue that confining utopia to fiction only or small colonies only, not to speak of pure ideas, is equally sterile, channeling it away from profits.⁴ None the less, we need as clear as possible distinctions and delimitations of concepts: but only if their articulation "cuts reality at its joints," that is, performs as good an approximation as possible to the increasingly complex barbarity and impurity of experience. For one example, the Disneyland experience feels all which is not being turned into exchange-value for and by corporations, all use-values not subject to the bottom line of "profit this year" and "as much profit as possible and the devil take the hindmost," as alien

and savage pollution finds the Amazon basin dirty. Let me mention only two further glimpses of invaded mega-fields which happen to be preying on my mind these years: molecular genetics and copyright. Alice Sheldon once complained about our world "where the raising of children yields no profit (except to television salesmen)" (45): this has been superseded by the politically shaped technology of Post-Fordism. For it is politics, no doubt in tandem with atomizing pervasive individualism, that enables molecular genetics businesses to patent DNA units and companies to copyright trademarks, so that one day we might have to pay royalties for having children,⁵ as well as for using nouns and verbs such as *more*. It is inside this world-whole all of us Jonahs, Shishutsu, and Norcos today live, cultivating our kale.

2. We Intellectuals in Post-Fordism

You may back off from the world's woes, you're free to do so and it lies in your nature, but perhaps this backing away is precisely the only way that you might avoid.

Rafin. Reflections on Sin, Woe, Hope, and the Way

It's the economy, stupid!
Anon., first Clinton campaign

2.0. "Let us go then, you and I / When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherized upon a table / ...like a tedious argument / Of7 immiseration / To lead you to an overwhelming question." (T.S. Eliot) — the question being first, "Why do we live so badly?" and second, "What orientation may get us out of it?" To isolate at different level the initial question: I adapted from Foucault: pragmatically, in the present to which all of us belong, "What is this present?" and "Who are we?". My working hypothesis for a first delimitation, without the ifs and buts no doubt necessary for further understanding, are: The what is Post-Fordism: the we is intellectuals.

I take the "economy, stupid!" slogan from Clinton's co-opting and obfuscatory Tweedledum campaign; but "Thank thee for

4/ It is necessary to say that I find much to interest and delight me in utopological writing, and that I have, of course, no objection to pragmatic delimitation of any field according to the delimiters' means, but only wish them to reserve the right to judge that interest! Be it in fact tomorrow we not only need a "pure utopia" as often as an *utopia*, but also (because) to isolate the (or a) political organization from the rest of world seems self-defeating.

5/ Cf. Thomson 152-153. This hypothesis is likely to be literally true if we specify "heavily" or even "normal life expectancy" children. The whole matter of so-called TRIPS (Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights) is an extremely important, disorienting, and sophisticated research of corporate oppression into the most intimate areas of everybody's life-world, which is — through extension of patent-law logic (for genetically engineered food, seeds, micro-organisms, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals) to copyright laws, including trademarks — also sucking in language.

teaching me the word" (Shakespeare). Its salutary action-orientation may be supplemented with the second thesis I submit to you: **The barrier between so-called "culture" and citizenship, which today means economically based macro- and micro-politics, has been wiped out in practice by our dystopian rulers.** It is time we recognized this in our legend theory or we shall be nailed onto our enemies, forced to accept them as overwhelming Destiny (that is to shift from dystopia to horror/apocalypse). There is no longer any believable utopian social movement which we could entrust with the task of economic politics, in which we then participate as citizens but not as professionals. The comforting economic and psychic rooth (Bellamy's and Bai Jia-yi's collective umbrella or blanket covering an entire city or province) holding us warm against the blasts of a then dispensable Destiny have been torn down. Therefore, formalism — an enclave of playful creativity amid the material necessities that negate consciousness, or Kantian aesthetics within a Hegels-Marxist politico-economic horizon — can today **only** be useful as the preliminary to a more concrete historic civic analysis, to politics in the Aristotelian and a critique of political economy in the Marxian sense. It is imperative that we realize — as the feminists have — epistemology does not function without asking the political question "what for?" or *qui bono*. It is not simply that there is no useful politics without clear perception: much more intimately, interests and values decisively **shape** all perception. So if we grasp that the barrier between such "cultural" discussion and politico-economy is simply sterile categorization and blindness, our politically and epistemologically connected theory would then be only following, 15 if not 30 years later, two generational waves of SF and utopianism, from Russ and Perry to Stan Robinson. The time for isolated formal poetics is over when the Geist has been colonized and our debates can no longer presume movements for the liberation of labour — as an "existing community of praxis" — as the ground for their figures (cf. Ahmad 70, 2. and postscript). I must respectfully posit as known my theoretical arguments from the first part of MGSF and most importantly from the "News" as well as the "Local" essay, and pass on.

2.1: Post-Fordism. In a long position paper for a Latin USL conference on SF, only a bit more than half of which has been lately printed in *Foundation* ("News"), I attempted an overview of Post-Fordism to which I must refer you for more detailed supporting. I summarize and partly develop it here. The argument is that we are at the descending part of the

boom-and-bust cycle. Its ascending part, that began in the 1930s, found in Fordism and Keynesianism the remedies to the dangerous 1920s' bust. These strategies effected a limited but real redistribution of wealth: Fordism through higher wages rendered possible by mass production of goods but neutralized by total production alienation and consumerist PR, Keynesianism through higher taxation neutralized by bourgeois control of the State. They functioned in feedback with the rise of production and consumption 1938-72, itself inextricably enmeshed with imperial extraction of surplus-value, armament production, and the warfare State. In class terms, Soviet pseudo-Leninism and Rooseveltian liberalism — as well as some important aspects of fascism — were compromises with and co-optations of the pressures and revolts by plebeian or labouring classes. In economic terms they meant the institution of a modest but real "security floor" to the lowermost classes of selected "Northern" countries as well as a great expansion of middle classes, including all those bearing or reading this, with a fairly comfortable financial status and an appreciable margin of maneuver for ideologic-political independence. Waltherstein somewhat optimistically numbers these "[share] in the surplus value" — us — as 30-50% of the world population, of course disproportionately concentrated in the richer North (Historical 123).

However, the shock of 1973, when we entered upon the "bust" part of the cycle that began with the 1930s-40s boom (the oil crisis, debt crisis, global domination of the World Bank and then of the corporate credit system, etc.), revealed that our planet Earth, a finite system, cannot expand indefinitely to bear 6 or 10 or 20 billion people up to the immensely wasteful "Northern" standards (see for ex. Lumsden 60-74). This real emergency was seized upon and twisted by the ruling capitalists into revoking both the Keynesian compromise with the metropolitan lower classes and the Wilsonian promise to the peripheral "South." In a fierce class war from above, through a series of hidden or overt putches by the Right wing (Hdden in the "North," from Britain to the USSR, overt in the "South" — China being the pivot between the two), all protective barriers and mitigating buffers are dismantled, so that what Marx called "the extraction of absolute surplus value" may be sharply increased: the security floor is abolished, the permanent Fordist class of chronically poor is now enlarged beyond one third even in the rich North, while the "middle" group of classes is squeezed back into full dependency by abolish-

ing financial security (there is a wealth of uncoordinated data on this, cf. for ex. Lash and Urry 160-68). This leads to increased world concentration of capital now dominated by caste of "multinationals."⁴ Closer to home, control of the major US media had passed from 50 corporations in 1983 to 20 in 1992, so that four movie studios (including Disney's Buena Vista Films), five giant book publishers, and seven cable TV companies — all interlocked with major banks — produce more than half of the revenue in their field (Magdikian ix-ix and 28-29). The dazzling surface array of diversity hides bland uniformity: there are 11,000 magazines but two *1/3* magazine publishers dominate the field... The people running these 20 media monopolies and their bankers "constitute a new Private Ministry of Information and Culture" (Magdikian xviii).

Rocketing indigence and aimlessness provide the ideal breeding ground not only for petty and organized criminality — business by other means — but also for its legitimization in discrimination and ethnic hatred (for ex. in India or Yugoslavia). The warfare state had a little hiccup after the end of Cold War but it has recovered nicely (the best estimate seems to show that 2/3 of US citizens' taxes go to pay for military technology and war, cf. Ross 4). The wealth-state transfer of wealth from one class to another goes on in spades but **for the rich**. The latest report to have percolated into public domains tells of the US Congress and FCC handing \$70,000,000,000.000 (yes, seventybilliondollars) to the TV conglomerate in free space as public airwaves ("Bandwidth"). We wonder the number of US-dollar millionaires has from 1980 to '88 risen from 574,000 to ca. 1,300,000 (Phillips 9-10) and of billionaires 1982-96 from 13 to 148, so that the "global Billionaires' club" of 450 members has a total wealth much larger than that of a group of low income countries comprising 56% of the world population (*Forbes Magazine* 1997, cited in Chossudovsky "Global"). Not to forget the Walt Disney corporation, its CEO Michael Eisner's salary is US\$ 750,000 plus huge bonus and stock options, while a Haitian worker is paid 64 (six cents) for one "100 Billionaires" children's garment ("Globallyspook") — such as probably worn by the happy Matay grandchildren. Whole generations, as well as the planetary environment for centuries into the future, are being mortgaged to an arrogant fraction of 1% on the top and a fearless world money market. The gap between the rich "North" and the poor "South" of the world system has doubled from 1960 to 1992, with the poor "transferring" more than \$21 billion a year into the coffers of

4/ As I write this in January 1998, the newest such case, the IMF "bailout" of South Korea, means in practice a cut in half in wages expressed in US\$, huge unemployment of employees and bankruptcies of small businesses, opening the door to takeover of Korean banks by foreign banks, strong reliance in government spending on social programs.

industrialization, and credit to business, factoring of the large domestic conglomerates — in brief, a whole driving "high tech and manufacturing economy up its quack" (Chossudovsky "IMF").

the rich" (*The Economist*, see Chomsky 62). Lowering "the cost of labour," the ultimate wisdom of capitalism, means impoverishing everybody who lives from her work and enriching top-level managers and the upper mercenarize (banking politicians, cops, engineers, lawyers, administrators...). The dire poverty gap is turning all societies into "two nations," with good services for the small minority of the rich and shabby ones or none for the dispensable poor. Compared to Dickens, we'll have more computers, more (or at least more talk about) sea, and more cynicism for the upper classes. Human groups divide into resentful islands who do not hear the bell tolling: Marx's "absolute general law of capitalist accumulation: accumulation of wealth is at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality" (*Selected* 483), has been confirmed in spaces.

What then is the balance sheet of the capitalist social formation? (cf. Wallerstein, *Historical* 99-106 and 117-177) Let me take the two most undoubted material achievements: production and length of life. As to the first, it is clear that human domination over nature has mightily increased: per unit of labour time, the output of products is considerably greater. In other words, technological productivity under capitalism has finally created the preconditions for rendering our globe habitable for all. But the habitability has been hijacked: is the required labour-time for production and reproduction per one person, per one lifetime or in the aggregate smaller? Certainly, is comparison to precapitalist formations the working classes "work much harder in order to merely scrape by; they may eat less, but they surely buy more" (Hobsbawm 124). Paul Lafargue's right to creative laziness is nowhere on the horizon. In the last 30 years, at the same time that a false declasserisation redraw political borders outside the metropolitan countries, from China to the Ukraine, "The world proletariat has almost doubled... [much of it] working under conditions of gross exploitation and political oppression" (Harvey 473). There is a serious possibility that the classical Marxist thesis of the absolute immiseration of the proletariat as compared to 500 or 200 years ago may after all be correct. If we look at the 85% or more of the working people in the world economy rather than only at the industrial workers of the metropolitan countries; and there is no doubt of the huge relative immiseration in comparison to the dominant classes and nations. Obviously, even the latter is politically quite explosive and morally unacceptable: it demoralizes and alienates all classes, it is different ways.

As to the second, infant mortality has been strongly reduced in peacetime: but have the

pollutions of air, water, and food as well as the psychic stresses and unceasing compulsion and insecurity lengthened life for those who survived beyond (and for infancy)? The jury is out on this; but the quality and ease of life has surely fallen sharply within my lifetime, and it is bound to fall exponentially with structural long-term unemployment. The amount of social waste and cruelty is larger than ever before in the century beginning with the great capitalist world war (1914). "[C]apitalism cannot deliver world peace" (Wood 265): we'll be very lucky if we have as further ABC was after the Gulf Oil one. Capitalism is positively dependent on ecological devastation, condensing geological change into historical time. True, "really existing socialism" also badly failed at this (not at keeping peace); but ecological vandalism is a

the world's cancer, and its subsumption under profit-oriented nationalism has caused a horrified massive reaction into irrationalism. And the destruction of local communities, knowledges, and living species from Columbus on is irreparable. For Homo sapiens and the planet, the price of drug, gun, and profits is too high.

2.2: Intellectuals. Post-Fordism is, then, the apparently final moulting of capitalism from individual into corporate. Where Fordism was characterized by "hard" technology, semi-automation, State planning, and the rise of mass media and advertising, Post-Fordism brings "soft" technology, automation, mega-corporations and world market regulation, as well as the integration of the media with the computer under total domination of marketing.



measure of capitalism's success, not failure: the more vandalism the more short-term profit (look at Amazonia). So I asked in "Sew": is our overheated society better than the "colder" one of (say) Tang China or the loquacious Confederates? There's more of us but do we have more space or more trees, per person? Many of us have less back-breaking toil, but all have more mind-destroying aimlessness resulting in person-killing by drug and gun: we have WTs but also cancer and AIDS... Most probably, even quantitatively — and with greater certainty qualitatively — the achievements of the bourgeoisie celebrated in *The Communist Manifesto* have been overbalanced by what it has suppressed.

One example of the very ambiguous balance sheet would be universalism and science. I discuss the latter in some detail in my Latinx study, and can here only telegraphically note that, while I wish to keep its cognitive orientation toward the systematic and testable understanding of material processes, it is also an institution both legitimizing and disciplining

In both cases, more "software" or "human engineering" people were needed to ensure not only production but also supervision and ideological updating of the ruling hegemony. One of the 20th Century's mainstays is therefore the enormous multiplication and enormous institutionalization or collectivization of the earlier "petty bourgeoisie," the independent artisan and small entrepreneur — "not all justified by the social necessities of production [but] by the political necessities of the dominant [class]" (Hobsbawm 13). These "new middle classes" comprise roughly everybody who works largely sitting down but does not employ other people: it is in fact a composite of social classes including teachers, office workers, salespeople, the so-called "lower" professions, etc. Often classified as part of a "service" sector, they could be properly called "the salaried classes." Their non-managerial core is constituted by "intellectuals," largely university graduates (but cf. more precisely the pioneering Mills book, *Male*, and the Ehrenreichs), people who work mainly with images and/or concepts and, among other functions, "produce, distribute

and preserve distinct forms of consciousness" (Mills 142). Blochbaum calculates that two thirds of the GNP in the societies of the capitalist North are now derived from their labour, though their proportion within the population is much inferior, globally perhaps 10-15%. Politically, they (we) may be very roughly divided into servants of the capitalist and/or bureaucratic state, of large corporations, self-proclaimed "apolitical" or "aesthetic" free-floater, and radicals taking the globalist side; the alliance of the first and fourth group with some non-"intellectual" classes determined both the original Leninism and New Deal.

In the Postford dispensation, liberal ideology claimed that the world is composed of innately directed atomic individuals within atomic national States, all of which can and will achieve infinite progress in riches by means of technology in a competitive market. It is actually this intermediate class-congerie in the world, the Ehrenreich's "professional-managerial class" (a nomination that usefully underlines their two wings), that has beyond doubt been materially better off than their earlier historical counterparts: but the price has been very high. The new collectivities, while mouth-biting Liberal slogans stripped of the State worship, need other-directed intellectuals. Post-Fordism has had quite some success in making intellectual "services" more marketable, a simulacrum of profit-making. This was always the case in sciences and engineering: industrial production since ca. the 1880s is the story of how "the capitalist, having expropriated the worker's property, gradually expropriated his technical knowledge as well" (Lauri xi, and see Noble). In the age of World War this sack in law, medicine, and "soft-science" consulting in the swarms of "professional expertise" mercenaries. Now, in the polarized and non-Keynesian situation, those who back the market better get themselves to a nursery. The class aggressions by big corporations against the immediate producers, corporate and intellectual, means that Jack London's dystopian division of workers under the Iron Heel into a minority of indispensable Mercenaries and a mass of downtrodden proletarians (updated, say, by Perry in *We, She and It*) has a good chance of being realized. The Polio mutant, whose the goles buy in the local supermarket the hand-me-down Garcia they've seen on the idiot box model-parades while the mercenaries live in Aspen and commute through cyberspace, does not invalidate this early Modernist diagnosis ("labour autonomy" in Lenin's language), rather it incorporates all the talk about status

Gramsci, the Ehrenreichs, Poulantzas, Reichartz-Wolf, Gullberg, and Robbins ed.) which would take into account a group's relation to both economics and to power and cultural positioning; I can only hope to identify the problem. On the one hand, as Marx famously chided, "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has turned the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the scientist, into its paid wage-labourers." (*The Communist Manifesto*) On the other hand, the contribution of the intellectuals into professions is impossible without a measure of autonomy; of corporate self-government and, most important, control over one's work. No doubt, this constitution was enabled by the fact that salaried men and women are "the assistants of authority" (Mills 74), but no authority can abide without their assistance. The socialist tradition from Marx through Lenin to Bukharin, Gramsci, and Reichartz has therefore always oscillated between praising the intelligentsia — for ex. the students — as the conscious interpreter of social contradictions and chastising it with scorpions as the producer of false consciousness; the Marxists rightly — if as a rule rather schematically — saw in this a homology to the intellectuals' ambiguous status of limited autonomy (cf. for one example Lenin's polemic with Bernstein, 338-06). We share to an exasperated degree the tug-of-war between wage-labour and self-determination: "[the middle class] individuals live or attempt to live an *idyllic* life, evading through 'culture', while their knowledge serves capitalism. . . . They live a double life . . . inside the 'gates' but with alibis. . . . in a jostling half real and half illusory." (Lelebré 12-33) Even the poorest intellectual participates in privilege through her "educational capital"; even the richest manager may not be able to rid himself of the uncomfortable itch of thinking. The increasingly marginalized and pauperized humanists and teachers are disproportionately contributed by women and non-"Whites," a sure index of subalternity. To the contrary, what Deleuze calls the reproductive or distributive intellectuals (95 and passim) — the engineers of material and human resources, the admen and "design" professionals, the new bishops and cardinals of the media clerisy, most lawyers, as well as the teeming swarms of supervisors (we teachers are increasingly adjunct policemen keeping the kids off the streets) — are the Post-Fordist "organic" mercenaries, whom Polio cynicism has dispensed from alibis.

Boudieu has intriguingly described intellectuals as "a dominated fraction of the dominant class" ("Intellectual" 245 and *Other* 519ff; cf. Gullberg 118ff.). Such semi-Foucauldian brilliances are too nonrelativistic and undialectical for

my taste, but it is true that the funds for this whole congeries of "cadre" classes — administrators, technicians, scientists, educators . . . have been drawn from the global surplus" (Wallerstein, *Historical* 83-84); as Sartre would say, none of us has clean hands. (I myself seem to be paid through loans to Québec by German banks, or ultimately by the exploitation of my ex-compatriots in Eastern Europe.) It is also true that the welfare-and-welfare State epoch saw the culmination of the "cut" from the global surplus via "middle" 10-15% were getting; and "the shouts of triumph of this 'middle' sector over the reduction of their gap with the upper one per cent have masked the realities of the growing gap between them and the other [85-90] per cent" (ibidem 104-05). So Boudieu is getting at our cosmopolitan position of a living contradiction: we are essential to the encasement and policing of workers, but we are ourselves workers — a position memorably encapsulated by Brecht's "Song of the [Time] Eighth Elephant" helping to subdue his recalcitrant natural brethren in *The Good Person of Setzuan*. Expropriating ever new ways to sell our expertise as "services" in producing and enforcing marketing images of happiness, we decisively contribute to the decline of people's self-determination and non-professionalized expertise (cf. Fox and Lean 9 and passim). We are essential to the production of new knowledge and ideology, but we are totally kept out of establishing the framework into which, and mostly kept from directing the uses to which, the production and the producers are put. Our professionalization secured for some of us sufficient income to turn high wage into immense capital. We cannot function without a good deal of self-government in our classes or artefacts, but we do not control the strategic decisions about universities or dissemination of artefacts. The list of such variants to It. Deleuze's trocheed Pashua-Pullu boy beast, between self-management and servitude, could be extended indefinitely.

3. The Bifurcations and the Alliances

The starting-point in critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is . . . as a product of the historical process to date, which has departed in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. Therefore, it is imperative at the outset to compile an inventory.

Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*

3.1. The main realization deriving from the preceding subsections is that we, following arguments such as Wallerstein's, that the hope for

an eventual bridging of the poverty gap is now over, and it is very improbable the Keynesian claim compromise can be dismantled without burying under its falsest capitalism as a whole. Will this happen explosively, for ex. in a quite possible Third World War, or by a slow "crumbling away" which would generate massive breakdowns of civil and civilized relations, as the model of the present "cold civil war" smouldering in the US, which as (as Dietrich's forgotten masterpiece 334 rightly saw) only comparable to daily life in the late Roman Empire? And what kind of successor formation will then be coming about? The age of individualism and free market is over, the present is already highly collectivized, and demographics as well as insecurity will make the future even more so: the alternative lies between the models of the oligarchic (that is centrally fascist) warcamp and an open plebeian-democratic commune (cf. Wagner 388, and passim).

In this realistically grim perspective, a strong argument could be made that fusing a dangerous series of "cascading liberalizations" (Wallerstein, *Historical* 155-56) our liberatory corporate or class interests as intellectuals are twofold and interlocking. First, they consist in securing a high degree of self-management, to begin with in the workplace. But second, they also consist in working for such strategic alliances with other fractions and classes as would consent us to fight the current toward militarized knoweasting. This may be most visible in "Confucian capitalists" from Japan to Malaysia, for ex. in the concentration-camp fate of the locked-in young women in industries of Mainland China, but it is well represented in all our sweatshops and fetters neighbourhoods (see the US example in Harvey). It can only be counteracted by conscious insisting on meaningful democratic participation in the control not only of production but also of distribution of our own work, as well as of our neighbourhoods. Here the boundary between us as it were dissident interests within the intellectual field of production and the overall liberation of labour as their only guarantee becomes permeable. True, history has shown that alliance-building is only more painful than lone organizing, any Mannheimian dream about the intelligentsia as utopian arbiter was unrealistic to begin with. But at least we know it can only be done by bringing into the marriage our honest interests and uncertainties, by enmeshing like the plague the *Pollio* certainty and apodictic terrorizing, adapted in a bizarre mimicry of their two rivals, adman and Stalinism, as the newest variant of the intellectual's illusion that they do not suffer from illusions (as Bourdieu somewhere said). Our immediate interests are oppositional because capitalism without a human face is obviously engaged in large scale "structural

declassing" of intellectual work, of our "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, and cf. Guillery 134ff.). There is nothing more humiliating, short of physical injury, than the experience of being pushed to the periphery of social values — measured by the only *paradict* capitalism knows, our financing — which all of us have undergone in the last quarter century. Our graduate students are by now predominantly denied Keynesian employment, condemned to part-time piecework without security. As Poulantzas observes, capitalism has now adjoined to the permanent reserve army of industrial labour that of intellectual labour (321-23). The new contract enforced on the "downside" generation is: "Woken undertake to find new occupations where they can be exploited in the clearest and most efficient way possible" (Lipietz 77). If the degree of autonomy within the "middle class" is inversely proportional to a given fraction's domination over workers, so that managers have little autonomy but great powers over workers (including intellectual workers), then university teachers never had any power over productive relations, but now we are bit by bit losing our relatively large autonomy. The difference between intellectuals and managers is analogous to that of monks to territorial priests in the medieval Catholic Church. The best we can today expect from capitalism is the shrinking and proletarianized plastic-tower autonomy of a begging order: the badly supplied but relatively undisturbed monastery of Thomas of Aquinas — certainly not the Abbey of Thélème, best as it is by an unlikely alliance of barbaric businessmen and what Sayyid C. Spivak (in Robbins ed. 357) calls "corporate feminists" (or corporate ethicists). This is not good enough.

3.2. In this kind, we can at any rate say to the supposed reality (Raz, *Vernach* 88-89): Look where you've landed us! There's no more reality without utopia! (Your reality itself works toward a negative utopia.) But what does this practically mean? A number of things.

First, it must be the bearer of painful news: the **professionalism** of which we were up to a point justly proud has been overwhelmingly corrupted — by outright larceny where it matters, by self-willed marginality in the humanities. The ivory of our towers has been largely ground into powder as aphoristic for the corporate bosses and enchantment for the elder *Matay zita*. Looking at our class position soberly, we shall have to redefine professionalism as including — rather than complementing — self-managing political citizenship or we shall be political by selling our brains to the highest bidder. This follows necessarily from the above discussion of epistemology and our class position, which are now revealed as two ways of

envisaging the same thing. On the one hand, in our classes we shall have to redefine, with Nietzsche, philology not simply as the art of reading rightly (what is there) but the art of reading *well* (what we may get from it). And outside the class it may mean anything from pickering the University Board or the Faculty of Business Management to lying down as the railway tracks (its use as impossible 405' parallel). It certainly means striving for activist unionization, at a time when corporations are corrupting academic administrators by making them into well-paid CEOs in exchange for downsizing teachers (see Foley 24-32 and Guillery). Like publishers vs. artistic cognition, universities vs. teaching cognition are now "the wine ... in charge of the pearls" (Anthony). As Benjamin put it, is the permanent part of an essay which was also written in a more hopeful situation:

... only by transcending the specialization in the process of production that, in the bourgeois view, constitutes its order can one make this production politically useful; and the barriers imposed by specialization must be breached jointly by the productive forces that they were set up to divide. The author as producer discovers — in discovering his solidarity with the proletariat — simultaneously his solidarity with certain other producers who earlier seemed scarcely to concern him. (230)

Only this, in his wonderful polymery, underlies *die Produktion der Intelligenz*: the production of us intellectuals, but also the productivity of intelligence or reason. And if we at the moment don't find many proletarian organizations to meet us in the middle of the tunnel, we can start by doing stupid cross-pollinations of at least the cultural with the philosophic, economic, political, and other history studies. It was unabashedly autobiographical, this is one of the reasons why I'm a member of the Society for Utopian Studies: or why I consider Allard's book on the political economy of music (the age of repetitive evacuation of meaning and big centralized apparatus determining production and listening as commodified time, best foregrounded in music) as one of the most enlightening diagnoses of Post-Fordism: or why my latest book interlards seven essays and seven sequences of poetry. But I'm afraid we'll have to reclaim the tradition of persecution singing, say, from Gyssne and Spinoza, through Marx's and Benjamin's exile from universities and many countries, to the Pope's treatment of Liberation Theology: such academic professionalism will entail less reading of papers and much more civic conflictuality.

Yet, on the citizenship end of the same continuous spectrum, it means beginning to fight two even more difficult long revolutions. One is to

marker what we might call, adapting Said, **critical worldliness**: Brecht called it the art of thinking also in other people's heads. Though we partly become intellectuals in order to get far from the madding crowd, our class and often even personal survival requires us then (now) — without surrendering either our bearings or the clarity of our arguments' articulation — to get out of the white ghetto of writing, theatre, etc., into the mass media. The most important politico-cultural position today is obviously the TV station, secondly the radio station, and thirdly the cinema and the video production. This is why they are also, in descending order, the most firmly controlled by millions and laws. Nonetheless, these may be limited chinks in the system, as proved by the stories of the three-kilometer-radius Japanese radio stations, or of the movie producing units at the end of 'real socialism' in East Central Europe — both successfully used by small self-governing groups. Video production, and in particular computerization and the Internet offer many possibilities, as far as by the Rightward subversives much more efficiently than by the Left. The second long struggle might be called **global solidarity**: it consists in fighting what would be a Fascist geopolitical involution, turning our privileged Northern continents into an insular Festung Amerika and Festung West-Europa. The Japanese dissident Moto Ichiji called it perhaps more poetically "transborder participatory democracy," and Douglas Lunnis argues on his tracks that it is a necessity of our time when "imperial power is incriminated in three bodies: pseudo-democracy at home, vast military organizations, and the transnational corporations. . . ." (Lunnis 138). Its farthest utopian horizon, absolutely necessary if we wish to avoid oblivion or caste society, is the long revolution of achieving "democratic forms of social control of financial markets" (Chossudovsky "DMP").

In sum, the Modernist oases for emiles (the Left Bank, Bloomsbury, lower Manhattan, major US campuses) are gone the way of a Tahiti polluted by nuclear fallout and venereal pandemic: some affluent or starving writers a la Pynchon at Joyce may still be possible, but not as a statistically significant option for us. Adapting Trivette's great line "All poets are Jews" (the poetry shiv), we can say that fortunately all intellectuals are partly exiles from the Disneyland and/or starvation dystopia, but we are as "inner emigrants" for whom resistance was always possible and is now growing mandatory. The only resistance to Disneyland brainwashing is "the invention of the desire called Utopia in the first place, along with new rules for the fantasizing or daydreaming of such a thing — a set of narrative protocols with no precedent in our previous literary institutions. . ." (Jennsen, *Seeds* 90). This would be a col-

lective production of meanings, whose efficacy is measured by "[how many] consumers it is able to turn into producers" (Benjamin, "Author" 283, and cf. *Artwork*) that is, to begin with, critical and not empathetic thinkers. And the only chance to do this is "[to keep] in touch with all kinds of streams of protest and dissent so as to know what's important to say" (Rosenreich 177-78, and cf. *passim*). And a final piece of painful news: this means "doing things we're not used to, like saying things that 'everybody' (meaning everybody in one wing of the profession) 'already knows'" (Bénabé 171, and cf. the whole section 164-78, esp. 176). The gentle reader will notice I haven't quite managed to follow this prescription. . .

3.3. Mindful of my Marxist roots, I shall nevertheless insinuate prophecies about the next generation or two. You can find it better in the dystopian SF I've already alluded to. But I wish to report that I find two of the best "conceptual" people, Raymond Williams from the humanities and Immanuel Wallerstein from the social sciences (*Historical* 382-63), quite independently (such is our bourgeois division of labour that even they, on the same political side in the same language, appear not to have read each other!) coming to a practically identical view of alternatives to capitalist commercialization. They are: Platonic fascism (authoritarianism), the Guardians being maybe half or less of the affluent 30-20% in the North of the globe: Neo-feudalism (paternalism), distinguished from the former by a significant breakdown in globalisation and division into local strata of different kinds; and finally, federated self-governing communes and work-groups (participatory democracy), a technologized Marxian Newhere as the nearest approximation to classless society we may today dream of. And we also have a good yardstick for measuring any change as it occurs: does it increase or reduce the exploitation of labour, of production in the widest sense (that includes art and love, cf. *Servis*, "Brecht"). Again, against the horizons of these blue distances the production of goods and the production of meanings grow indistinguishable.

To conclude: we have no choice but to propose the most daring utopia, which is today, to begin with, not Earthly Paradise but the prevention of Hell on Earth. May the Earth remain our habitable mother, rather than being pushed by greedy class and imbecillitated masses (as today) the way of ecological catastrophe, and the ensuing great Migration of Peoples, the bitter State and corporation wars, the civil wars of constructed racism and ethnicity! But paradoxically, I am persuaded that **finally** — which is not at all opposed to other medium-range horizons — only the most radical counterpoise,

a flexible system of what Marx called the free association of direct producers, the horizon of a global self-sustaining and self-managing society — which is socialism — has a chance: only mobilizing Paradise or Utopia as Hell or Fascism be defeated. Fuller's slogan "utopia or oblivion" can be interpreted to mean the threatening loss of historical memory for almost all that distinguishes our horizons from a caste society.

Yet, of course, when the status quo collapses, the bifurcations are unforeseeable. Behind the alternative between utopia and disastrous being there lurks stasis vs. non-being. The alternative to a habitable planet is not only the present creeping death of the mind and values but sweeping and totally non-metaphorical death. At any rate, as Brecht wrote in the dark little poem on reading Horace's account of the Great Deluge:

Even the Deluge
Did not last for ever.
At some point
The black waters receded.
And yet, how few people
Lasted that long! (GW 30: 1814)

So: having arrived within hailing distance of the end of our species and perhaps of vertebrate life on Earth, the wonderful but possibly somewhat idle form of the scholarly essay begins at the end to fall me. I shall therefore try to encapsulate what I had to say here in five slogans (aided by Haug, *Versuch* 89 and 498, and Meylan):

No way out of dystopia except as orientation to utopia — and viceversa.
No optimism (perceiving, understanding, culture) without politics — and viceversa.
No social liberation without self-management (in workplace as well as all other places) — and viceversa.
No democracy without (the best from) socialism, ecology, and feminism — and triply viceversa.
"And if you think this is utopian, please think why it is such" (Brecht).

And the one-but-last slogan above leads me to say, in parting, that in my experience to have either Marxists or Marxism is not enough for socialism, and to have socialism is not enough for self-management. Not even the slogan's Holy Quaternity is enough: our utopian pantheon of Supreme Goods should be flexibly polythetic. But: there is no full and sustainable self-management without socialism — "the primary 'active utopia'" not only "of modern times" (Goodwin and Teyler 146), but with due modification the inescapable spouse of any consistent, radical utopia; and no full and sus-

tainable socialism without the fundamental utopian and critically anti-utopian insights of Karl Marx.

Utopia as static goal has been dead since the 19th Century, even if its posturing calender possessed the 20th. Marx's critique of Cabet's project of emigrating to found a colony as desertion from class struggles [and I find it rather significant that Marx did not focus on criticizing Cabet's earlier —rather poor— utopian novel], could have taught us that "the place of utopia is not elsewhere, but here and now, as other" (Marin 349). As Galvino's "city

which cannot be founded by us but can found itself within us, can build itself bit by bit in our capacity to imagine it, to think it through" (252), utopia cannot die. But its latest rebirth depends on us. I give you what I have learned in this truncated half century, through hope and terror and finally compassionate solidarity (the Aeneas of Huxley's *Requiem for a Wicked Man*, the ironic tenderness of *Requiem*).

Do not expect from utopia more than from ourselves.

Manfred, Sept. 1997

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GRADED COSMOPOLITISM: A LIVABLE UTOPIA

Nenad Mišević

What is the right form and scope of cultural life and creative endeavor? Is it cosmopolitan, or is it narrowly national? The second option is defended both by traditional cultural nationalists, and by the more up-to-date authors whom one may call *divisary multiculturalists*, whose slogan is: multiculturalism, yes, but with a neat separation between the co-existing cultures. This is the issue I want very briefly to address here.

Most intellectuals in the Western countries today live in a quite cosmopolitan micro-world. As J. Waldron describes it, (Waldron 95)

The cosmopolitan may live all his life in one city and maintain the same citizenship throughout. But he refuses to think of himself as defined by his location or his ancestry or his citizenship or his language. Though he may live in San Francisco and be of Irish ancestry, he does not take his identity to be compromised when he learns Spanish, eats Chinese, wears clothes made in Korea, listens to arias by Verdi sung by a Maori princess on Japanese equipment, follows Ukrainian politics, and practices Buddhist meditation techniques. He is a creature of modernity, conscious of living in a mixed-up world and having a mixed-up self.

Can such cosmopolitanism be expanded from the intellectual's micro-world to the world at large? Can there be a general cosmopolitan culture, that would make true the cosmopolitan utopia and is there a possibility for such a thing to actually get off the ground? Some authors, for instance Waldron himself think yes. However, there is a growing consensus that cosmopolitan utopia will necessarily remain what it is, a utopia.

The main critics of utopia are cultural nationalists. Here is their typical line of argument.

(I) The pre-nationalist theoretician claims that cultural identity is paramount for personal identity and the flourishing of the individual. (This is the line of thought that is often traced back to Herder, and in the Anglo-American literature to Isaiah Berlin). Cultural identity, however, means ethno-cultural identity: "National identity is best cultivated in a small, relatively closed and homogeneous framework, which neither wishes nor needs to reach beyond the members of the nation" (Tamin, 1993: 131). I note that Tamin is aware of the importance of macro-cosmos but does not focus on them).

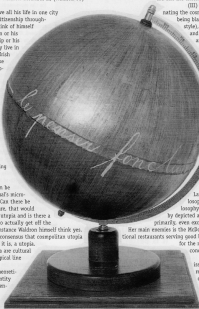
(II) Next, the defender of the culture-based nationalism presents the reader with a forced choice concerning forms of culture: In deciding for a form of culture (for yourself and your descendants) to live in, you have two options only: either abide by your own traditional

culture, as it has been defined by your national-ethnic framework, or choose an indiscriminate cosmopolitan culture. The analogous choice is offered to a would-be language (for an excellent formulation see Miller, 1995, Ch.7, Conclusion): favor the national cultural tradition or open the door widely to the cosmopolitan world-culture. (The usual invidious metaphor for characterizing the 'cosmopolitan self' is that of raciness, e.g. Margalit, 1997: 85). To dramatize a bit, let me call the choice The Tribe-or-World Dilemma.

(III) The argument then proceeds by eliminating the cosmopolitan utopia: it is presented as being bland, commercialized (McDonald's style), and incapable of supporting a strong and flourishing identity. The best authors are more cautious but still quip about McDonald's: "The benefits of high culture will be confined mostly to an elite...The non-elite will have to put up with the lowest common-denominator mass culture exemplified by Disney. McDonald's and Australian soap-operas" (Miller, 1995: 187).

(IV) Justice then demands that ordinary people be given a chance to enjoy valuable culture, and the only option in the field is the national, traditional culture. Therefore, in the domain of arts and sciences it is the traditional, ethno-national culture that should be supported: Latvian writers, painters and composers should find inspiration in the Latvian tradition and the Latvian philosophy departments. The nationalist is hereby depicted as defending her traditional culture primarily, even exclusively against the cosmopolitan one. Her main enemies is the McDonald's: they will be replaced by traditional restaurants serving good local food (well, who would not vote for the nationalist if this were her chief concern!).

We should then distinguish two issues: first, is the cosmopolitan option really so bland and impotent, and second, is it really the only alternative to the ethno-national, 'tribal' traditionalism? As far as the first question goes the anti-cosmopolitan (e.g. D. Miller) cannot without begging the question criticize cosmopolitan mass 'culture' just for being cosmopolitan (and this is probably not his intention); on the other hand, when implicitly criticizing it for its low quality, he should for the purpose at hand compare it with national mass 'culture': say a McDonald's with a Bierstube of Bavaria, and soap-operas with the sausage hotdoggan customs accompanying important football matches in Britain, Italy and in my country. For my part, I prefer the soap-operas and Disney over bloody fights of nationalistic football-fans. Here is a nice example of what cosmopolitanism in arts is like: the Italian conductor Claudio Abbado as the new director of the Berlin Philharmoniker makes them play much more French music - not Italian - than before; especially



Dimitrie Radulescu
Margaret Le
projet principal de
la dernière
collection, 1978,
soyfic on globe

Ravel, whose predominant taste is famously for Spanish music. As far as I can tell, the result is all but bland.

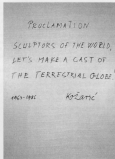
Now, even if the answer to the first question is *Yes* (Waldron, 1995, *The Cosmopolitan Alternative*; i.e. Kymlicka), many people might still go along with the thought expressed in the above quotation from David Miller and feel that the genuinely cosmopolitan option is in most countries of the world opened only to a small elite (capable of extensive traveling, speaking foreign languages, capable of understanding a wide variety of the forms of expression and empathizing with unfamiliar emotional complexes expressed). It demands an involved process of training and sustaining that might be too costly for most individuals and communities. The "tribal" alternative is therefore still the winning one, many readers might think.

Things look different when we turn to the second question, i.e. whether the dilemma is really exhaustive. Within each macro-region in the world there are sufficient cultural similarities that ground a macro-regional culture, intermediate between a purely cosmopolitan and the purely ethno-national one. For instance, south-Mediterranean culture unites some Arab and some non-Arab cultures, north-Mediterranean one unites very different national cultures—some Romance, some Slavic, plus Albanian, Greek, and Turkish, and many authors see both macro-cultures as merging in the wider Mediterranean culture.

Equally, to move to the level lower than a macro-region, in contemporary states ordinary people of different ethnic background live together, interact rather closely and occasionally intensely without spontaneously and insistently demanding to be separated. This gives a lie to the nationalist claim that normal life, identity and flourishing is impossible unless one is a citizen of one's particular national state. We should assume that people are "noting by their feet" for staying together; in contrast to the isolationism implicit in a lot of pro-nationalist literature.

What is the moral status of this fact? I submit that it is positive, for the following reasons: first, it diminishes the rational fear and suspicion of what is "foreign" to one. Fear and suspicion are the prime movers of mutual distrust, and more often than not lead to Prisoner Dilemma type situations; second, it teaches individuals to recognize the common humanity under the guise of variation and difference, a recognition that is itself of intrinsic moral value. Call the resulting constraint upon the desired form of cultural life

The Cohabitation Constraint: Under normal circumstances in a modern state citizens of different ethnic background live together, and very often value this kind of life. This very fact of cohabitation is a good to be upheld. Such a



Ivan Kataris' Proclamation, 1963-1966, felt tip pen on paper

If the preservation of a culture doesn't not collide with the preferences and long term interests of its members (including the need for creative innovation), nor with the interest of the other members of their civic (territorial) community, it is better — *ceteris paribus* — to preserve it than not to

state should therefore secure a stable and enduring framework for cohabitation. The pro-nationalist literature on secession creates an impression of permanent state of alert; various national communities are depicted as constantly "celebrating their diversity" and potentially or actually demanding a sovereign state, those which don't are implicitly depicted as being not sufficiently self-conscious. In contrast to this picture, The Cohabitation Constraint reminds political theoreticians (and politicians should they but heed it) that outbursts of minority demands for separation are not spontaneous expressions of a permanent and rational yearning, but most often the result of the failure of the majority to provide genuinely equal conditions for the members of the

minority, and of estrangement due to this imposed, not-willed isolation of the minority. (Take the Arab working class in France. A young Arab woman living in Paris has little to gain by identifying herself with Muslim fundamentalist and extremist movements: she would hardly live a decent life by her own standard if such movements were in power. Any sympathy for the movements she might have is more probably due to other estrangement in France, feeling of being rejected by the core French society, than to any deep religious or identitarian need. The same seems to hold for Turkish youths in Germany, who feel permanently denied the chance of becoming socially equal members of the dominant society and respond to rejection by rejecting its values in turn.)

Now, the standard nationalist reply is that coethnicity is dangerous for identity and thereby for the stability of persons. It is alleged to beget weak, neurotic "persons without qualities" — (Have a cup of coffee with a foreigner and you loose your soul, as the prophet Isaiah thought.) This reply deserves rebuttal, and perhaps a bit of debunking.

Philosophically, it rests upon the confusion of the (numerical, literal) sameness of the person and mere cultural "identity". Remember the examples of conventions and negations: even deeply held identifications can be meaningfully given up without a loss, even with a gain for a person.

Psychologically, it rests upon the confusion of the strength of identification and the rigidity of the trait, i.e. upon assuming that the former increases with the latter. It is analogous to the mistake of thinking that the tougher you treat your child, the tougher and more stable she will become. We have no reason to think that this holds, that for instance the identification with Hitlerjugend (a very rigid belonging) produces more stable adults than identification with a rock band (a very flexible one), quite the contrary.

Sociologically, it involves a certain amount of blindness to the plurality of actual belongings, and the immense number of potential ones.

What is then the positive upshot of these warnings?

Philosophically, it should be stressed that one's cultural "identity" is not the (numerical) sameness of the person. One should distinguish between cultural (psycho-social) identity which is "identity" in a metaphoric sense (thanks, Bonard!) from the literal, sameness of a living person, and recognizing that the former can be flexible and changing without thereby jeopardizing the latter. As the experiences of conversion and sincere changing of sides show, even deeply held cultural identifications can be meaningfully given up without a loss, even with a gain for a person. Conservative pre-nationalists, like McIntyre, implicitly confound

cultural identity and actual sameness of the person, deriving from this confusion the idea that cultural identity is sacred and untouchable. The post-modernists correctly start from the actual pluralism of cultural identity, but make the opposite mistake, conventionalizing even the natural given. They also confound cultural identity with the literal sameness of the self, and then proceed to argue that we should explode the self in order to preserve pluralism. This begets the strange rhetoric of plural and multiple selves ("desecrified animal" [Deleuze-Guattari, etc.]) suggesting actual dissolution of the numerical identity; as if I miraculously stop being the person I am by adoption of a different cultural and political attitude.

The key to a reasonable solution lies in the proposed distinction between the literal sameness of the person or the self (which is in this basal sense numerically one), and the pluralism of cultural identifications, resulting in a plural and changing cultural identity (in a non-literal, metaphoric sense). The verisimilitude of the cultural identity is not compromised by the fact that it is not literal sameness. It is the psychological importance of identification that makes cultural identity crucial, and not the link with numerical sameness. Let me explain. If one identifies with a trait one is prone to ascribe to it factual importance in one's past biography and actual decisions. Equally, one tries to act out or at least in accordance with the trait and its normative commitments, and to develop these commitments. Furthermore, in the case of a double identification there is a loop of mutual reinforcement between the trait and the attitude. All this gives enough seriousness to the identification, without any need to promulgate the trait into something that is ontologically necessary for the sameness of the person.

Let us return to more practical matters. Psychologically, there is probably no positive correlation between the rigidity of the trait and the stability of identification: flexible traits can support stable identification. Finally, everyday experience shows that people both change their identifications during their lifetime, and that mutually incompatible identifications take turns in taking lead at various times: a football fan will have no problem identifying with his home team when it plays against others in the national league, with the national team when playing with foreigners, and with chess, close foreigners when they play with distant or particularly disliked ones.

These remarks take care of the accusation that multiple identifications make for a "weak self". On the contrary, they make part of the ordinary richness of life and opportunities. The "mixed self" is a rich self.

What is then the political framework for such a self? Assuming that politics deals with



Mladen Stijević: *An Artist who Cannot Speak English* is our artist, 1994, synthetic material

One should distinguish between cultural identity which is "identity" in a metaphoric sense from the literal, sameness of a living person, and recognizing that the former can be flexible and changing without thereby jeopardizing the latter

the traits concerning the belonging to larger social groups or categories, the prime concern should be with the non-voluntary traits (like race, gender, ethnic origin), so we shall focus on these.

1) People normally prefer to identify themselves with what they see as positive traits (this is part of the understandable optimism of our inner make-up); it is a rather tragic fate to have to identify with a trait one finds worthless or despicable.

2) If a certain non-voluntary trait obviously and persistently plays a significant role in one's life, it is impossible not to acknowledge it as one's own, not to accept its consequences for oneself, and in this sense not to identify with it.

3) Actual belonging to a certain given category (prominently race, gender, ethnic origin) is often non-voluntary. If such a belonging is at the same time socially devalued and treated as significant negative trait of the person bearing it, the person will most often be forced to identify with it (in the sense given in 2) and bear the consequences; at worst, the person will interiorize the social judgment and himself find the trait worthless or despicable.

4) This gives us the link with dignity and recognition (categories put forward by Taylor and his followers). I.e. with the demand that belonging to a given category should not clash with person's self-respect. The non-voluntary belonging should be socially recognized, and not devalued. Let us call the upshot

The Dignity Constraint: At minimum, one should not unjustifiably be put in a position to have to be ashamed of one's objective belonging to a given social category. I.e. one should be enabled to carry the trait in question with dignity. At more than a minimal level, one should be able to cherish, care for and develop the elements of one's belonging if one chooses to, provided the identification does not clash with general moral requirements. Equally, one should be free not to identify with such a belonging, to take it as an accidental and limiting trait, without incurring any negative political consequences.

The minimal requirement is the requirement of non-discrimination, that basically has to do with the value of equality. The more than minimal desideratum concerns opportunities to develop one's identifications in a free and spontaneous manner (both in the positive direction of acceptance of what is given or negative in the sense of the right to exit) and derives from the value of liberty.

The Cohabitation and the Dignity constraints suggest a pluralist, inter-cultural



framework that can inherit the pluralism from the cosmopolitan utopia, but make it more graded, respecting the circles of local, national, macro-regional and possibly other identifications. What we need is the

Communication Constraint: cultural creation (especially original creation) depends upon communication and interpreting of different styles of life and work.

This is meant to counterbalance the more narrow consideration which claims that the diversity of cultures (preserved in a state which allows them to be recognized) is an important good. We should then leave a wide margin of choice to the interested individuals themselves: in fact, they should do the balancing. If the preservation of a culture doesn't not collide with the preferences and long term interests of its members (including the need for creative innovation), and with the interest of the other members of their civic (territorial) community, it is better—*ceteris paribus*—to preserve it than not to. Therefore, in circumstances specified and only under such circumstances, the individual pursuit of the preservation of culture is a morally valuable task (on equal footing with the pursuit of originality and innovation). The interest for the preservation of a culture which many individuals share by their free choice is a *prima facie* reason to support it by administrative measures (but only to the extent allowed by (FF)). There is no a priori suspicion that the culture in question is a national one; the support is equally due to micro- and macro-regional traditions and particularities.

This is then the proposal of a pluralist, non-nationalist variant of the defense of cultural diversity. It replaces the quasi-mythical idea of the purity of a culture with a more

Željko Jermar: This is not my World, 1976, acrylic, textile

generous condition, namely the preservation of a culture in a recognizable form. It stresses the plurality of cultural forms, many of which are not specifically ethno-national, and it places on equal footing the antiquarian interest of preservation and the striving for originality and innovation. This attitude also allows for correction of morally repulsive traits of any given culture. The proposal takes into account the fact that the creative development of art and culture might require a pluralist context which can go in our time all the way towards a cosmopolitan setting.

II) The philosophical underpinning

Let me now pass to more speculative and philosophical matters. The philosophical underpinning for the particularistic picture is the view of particular culture, prominently language, as creating a natural framework, a "see-and-nature", that is the culture's member only need to the world of meanings, values and of human and cultural significance in general. Only within a given comprehensive linguistic-cultural tradition (or practice) is life to be lived. Of course, the preservation of such given traditions—in their pure form—is then the paramount task of cultural politics. The cosmopolitan looses.

The way for the graded cosmopolitan to resist this picture is to stress the amount of convention implicit in language and culture. Since the language is the paradigmatic example for the particularistic traditionalists, I shall in this brief sketch limit myself to it.

Why are meanings for the naïve speakers naturally "inseparable" from her language?

Meanings are learned together with words and sentences, and become fixed in coraciously understanding and speech. This engenders the feeling of naturalness: of course, the word-shape "cat" means CAT and refers to cat(s). We don't need psycholinguists to tell us this: the experience of learning a foreign language is enough. You first put together the word "chat" and the meaning CAT which may be, for you, incarnated in the English word and for the time being inseparable from it. After having spoken French for a longer time, you come to recognize the meaning "immediately", the word "chat" begins for you to refer to cats without any need to invoke the English intermediary.

With the acquisition of first language, the issues are more controversial. It is not clear what kind of concepts the prelinguistic ones are (if such exist, as the cognitive scientists are more and more inclined to believe). Certainly, a lot of concepts are acquired through the acquisition of language, and inseparable from it. Now, a monolingual child normally assumes that the naming relation is in a sense "natural": of course, the word for cat is "cat", what else? The conventional character of the word form-meaning connection is hidden from view, unavailable for the learner. I propose that we take this simple fact as our paradigm for explaining the felt naturalness of the semantics of our mother tongue.

The psychologists will some day come up with a detailed explanation of why conventionality of certain relations keeps such a low profile and stays in the background, if nothing intervenes. The lack of consciousness certainly makes learning simpler by reducing the number of alternatives the learner would be tempted to think of: but the phenomenon might also be a

byproduct of our neural design. For instance, the learning of a dialect is generally less flexible than propositional learning, and a lot of semantic knowledge may be just skill of use. Alternatively, one could argue that neural networks are extremely good at simple and univocal associations, and rather bad at subtleties. Whatever the actual bio-psychological cause, the effects are tremendous. The low profile is responsible for the dramatic difference between the view from within a given language and the view from without.

The feeling that a word has a semantic "profile," a "physiognomy" is tied to this fusion of meaning and form. But there is more to it, and we shall come to this more in a moment, when coming to the affective significance. The acquisition of language does not stop at the recognition of merely semantic profiles. It involves a "thick" significance, rich with emotional and evaluative overtones. If the word "most" does not sound unusual to you, you have not even begun to master French.

The learning of foreign languages offers again a useful paradigm. The graphic shape "most" in my colloquial dialect means *PLATIER*, and is far from devoid of any emotional significance. The sound pattern /mo:st/ in English (meaning, of course MORE) is often emotionally equally bland. Now, in learning French, I have to "see" the graphic shape as embodying the meaning *MORT*, and my anglophone counterpart has to "hear" the sound pattern "most" as doing the same. In doing so, we presumably transfer the emotional overtones associated with the meaning and relevant to the newly learned word. The assumption is a piece of commonsense. It is not because of the sound of the word that we fear death; but the other way around. The form of word "death" carries an emotional overtone since its meaning does, the meaning does shape the (type-)verbal form. Equally, the form of the word "most" begins to acquire the overtone, since the learner associates the French meaning with it.

We can return our story about semantic meaning, applying it this time to the affective significance. The child does not start from the correct view that it is a matter of convention what the sound /mo:st/ stand for, for little Jacqueline it is a scary word, whereas for Johnny the same sound pattern is a useful device for asking for a second helping. Again, the conventional character of the link between the word and the significance remains in the background, or even completely hidden from the speaker. Worse yet, the inability to think of alternatives and the feeling of complete fusion is a sign of deep, spontaneous mastery of language. It is then used by the poet...

The fusion results in the following phenomenon: the emotional overtones of "most" and "death" are not the same, but perhaps not exactly the same. It is not that death itself is

scary to the French in a different way. More probably, our access to emotion is holistic and blurred so that a difference in the vehicle—the word-shape—is felt as a difference in content.

I propose that we apply the language analogy to the traditions. Once we become aware of the ancient and the role of conventional and historical element in cultural practices, we might avoid the blind particularistic attachments. Let me again start with a linguistic illustration. Starting conveniently from the naïve insider's viewpoint *voir communautaire* and/or *pro-nationalist* philosopher takes as his plausible springboard the plain fact that one's mother tongue is one's first and perhaps most important window to the realm of concepts, knowledge, social and cultural significance, and so on. Well, such a precious thing then certainly demands an active and vigilant effort at preservation in as pure state as possible. Moreover, who is the naïve speaker himself to decide about the matter; she should be so to speak grateful to the higher powers of the language in which and through which she has been socialized and to which she owes "the better part of herself," indeed her very identity. What our philosopher has forgotten to add is that the same individual might have acquired almost exactly the same, and certainly no less useful, concepts, knowledge, significances and identifications in

first, almost any other dialect or language spoken around the place.

second, in an "arguep," suitably mixed dialect of the same language.

third, counterfactually, in any of the less pure successions of the "pure" language, which will be spoken in the same place if no-one intervenes in, say, fifty years. (Add to this that most concepts we philosophers tend to care about have been transmitted to us—in English speaking traditions—in an impure, Latinate linguistic garb, through remnants of various Romance and later English transformations of Scholastic Latin, for which any Roman communitarian would have had nothing but disgust. The lingo we identify with is the highly abstract idiom of a highly cosmopolitan quasi-community, and it serves us much better than any historically pure, community-bound—in the communitarian sense of a community—idiom could do.) Once we realize this situation of indifference between options [of "radical contingency" as some of the readers will, perhaps want to put it], we shall be less ready to draw prescriptive political consequences from the facts of language acquisition.

The same should happen when we transfer the idea to cultural traditions in general. The insight into the amount of conventionality in the culture should make us aware of the alternatives, and help support the cosmopolitan alternative.

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NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN A SEMIOTIC CONTEXT

(Nationalism versus Internationalism: the Albanian perspective)

Bujar HOXHA Introduction

The turns of various eras in history, and a renewed interest in them, became rather fashionable at the end of our century. Many warriors, politicians, tourists, but also scholars have been lured by them. We must admit it has in recent years become a very frequently discussed topic, as if somebody could resolve such matters like a magician.

We see magicians quite frequently in theatres, duly established and cased in by art-directors, especially here, in the South of the Balkan Peninsula. Ever since the end of the twentieth century has begun to draw near, the resolution of various problems has been announced and proposed a thousand times. And still the irrecoverable time goes on, as if no one ever noticed its chronic importance and its hesitiveness: repetition ad infinitum.

It is a very interesting situation when seen through the eyes of a semiotician. It happens but seldom that one finds a single interpretation of a problem: there are always more than one and you never feel the gradual changes which so often occur: after the event that took place is the first tide of time has happened; one tries to step time but cannot.

Branko Brezovic:
Bocchuska, 1997,
Youth Cultural
Centre Skopje &
Internat. Stockholm
photo: Sandra
Vitalje

If I have dreamed of
creating a circle of my own
and living quietly, why did
somebody try to interrupt
my thoughts? Why did
somebody put the members
of my family in jail?
Did they deserve it?



This is a senescent situation and a utopian one: on the one hand, one is idealistic enough to reach for the impossible, within a thinking the intelligence and morality of his culture allow him, a thinking that has returned to the rituals, culture and identity of a nation in a good and traditional way; and on the other hand, an inevitable event comes about immediately and one never really can explain what happened. So the appearance, the situation of real utopia, is suppressed by a realistic one, which comes from the previously established concept of time, again not properly defined, and "spoils" the relations among people.

One may often have heard the politicians speak like this: "The situation and the state our nation is in is that of being under a threat; we have to find a quick remedy." But also like this: "I did not mention that option although I would not say I deny it; it goes without saying that there are democratic means to resolve the situation." Such claims are of course correct from the grammatical as well as logical point of view, and so is their twofold semantic message. However, it is of

paramount importance to us that they present a peaceful twofold relation: of the two concepts that contraindicate each other, and then of the other two of their counterparts; which are in turn in a relation of juxtaposition as seen from the perspective of A. J. Greimas.

To deduce the meanings of these statements, to see them decomposed into their surface structure, requires much work. Here are some of the methods by means of which one could try to understand such meanings: first try to define the topic linguistically when it is not generalized and then idealize it. When it is so, the given elements are arranged according to their semantic importance. Noam Chomsky says, we can generate an infinite number of topics seen as deep structures; they might as well be meaningless; they must undergo the processes of transformation so that we get the surface structures, which are the forms we can comprehend.

So if, as we said, a nation is in a situation of being threatened, it goes without saying that it is jeopardized and in need of a way out. *Remedy* should be the key word for a politician who would like to resolve the problem fast. Nevertheless, apart from its denotation, a word has connotations as well. The connotation, as opposed to denotation, gives us the secondary meaning(s) of a word, the one(s) that can also be "understood" or kept in mind as the real meaning(s) hidden beneath the exposed one(s). The situation gets more complicated. One really must understand, really has to resolve the situation. That is one of the most difficult issues in the arts: how would one like to resolve the exposed idealization of a play, a drama or an opera, or a symphony. Finally? By expressing the denotational aspect or the connotational aspect of the message or by confusing the two? Should one convey the message in words crystal clear or should one make it ambiguous, to use the terms of Jacques Derrida?

If the resolution is direct, if it only denotes and does not connote, there is as well: the audience and the public opinion can really understand it and one gets criticized as one gets a big applause. At least, that is how most politicians would react.

Creation of an independent state: a utopian perspective

Roberto felt so independent when he used to sail the seas in a small boat in Umberto Eco's novel *L'isola del giorno prima* (The Island of the Day Before, Bompiani, Milan, 1996).

So many fortunes and misfortunes had he experienced, so many people had he met on various islands he visited. You could learn the history of various religions here, various nations who were and were not occupied and colonized. Roberto was free and independent

when he was alone, he had enough food to eat, and could think of various situations that he could only imagine. To that utopia of his I liken my own utopia of being independent.

The dystopia, the appearance of discrepancies within the communication channel, is how one really lives, as opposed to what Roberto might have dreamed of. The fight with the sea, the various injuries, are the discrepancies, the consequences of what we have just stated. "No-one mentioned that option, but I can't deny it: there are certainly democratic means..." Democratic means to imagine, yes.

When faced with an ever more confusing situation, in the Balkans you usually mention history: the way of creating a nation and then a state. I too have been thinking of creating an island of my own. As Roberto has very frequently thought of doing in Eco's novel.

The very frequently mentioned dichotomy between appearance and reality, utopia and dystopia (what one imagines and what really takes place), is really our main interest here. If I have dreamed of creating a circle of my own and living quietly, why did somebody try to interrupt my thoughts? Why did somebody put the members of my family in jail? Did they deserve it?

The court said: "You wanted to create an independent state!" Well, I did not know that, I would say. I still do not understand what a state is and how does it function, but I do know what I want: my own island, a small one, like Roberto's maybe a politician or two who would express themselves denotatively and not connotatively; and a University where I could work. And again: "No, you want a state".

I would like to speak like a politician or a reporter if I could. Till try: autonomy has been denied us without a permission of any kind in 1989. They simply came and plundered the houses, took anything they could, closed the University, and kicked two million people out of work. We were occupied. "This is a typical method of colonization: it has never occurred in history for it to be used in such a cruel way," claimed the politicians. The nation the occupation of which has never officially been declared began to live under and along with the occupiers. The Sansarman dictionary of the occupier and the occupied again. Just like the signifier and the signified in semiotics.

The occupied then really started thinking of having an island of their own, like in Eco's novel. But in contrast to Roberto, who had it all the time, because it was idealistic (I speak of his better moments, of course, at least that is what I felt as an empirical reader, in Eco's terms), the occupied nation did not have it any more. It was a dystopia really. Quite a catastrophe, which led the people to get themselves organized and make the occupying nation say: "You are not allowed to create an independent state." There are three more mil-

lions on the other side of the border, but there is a border, a real one: it is no utopia.

The process of thinking goes over the borders established by decisions, by political will, because it can go beyond the limits of logic. A human being can transmit ideas over the borders of any country in a simple way; in contrast, the dystopia of those sailing over them cannot be thus transmitted. Books have been written over in jail. But again one wonders: why is jail? "Because you wanted an independent state!"

This is really hard to grasp: who was the first to mention that? Is it not dystopia that constrains one's rights and freedom to express oneself? Chomsky himself explained the discrepancies in the processes of transformation as constraints. If constraints appeared he could hardly make a sentence with all its characteristics. He wanted the sentence complete word for word, each element to be seen as a distinctive feature, as differing from one another, so as to be generated in the end.

According to this paradigm, it is impossible to create an independent state if one does not reconsider the hierarchy of its development. Politics is exactly like linguistics. The former is opposed to the latter, as it is not exact, but utopian: to reach the highest level straight away, one has to use sentences which can consist apart from denoting. That is the way one can proclaim an independent state, which is in that case seen as a negative consequence of rationalism. It is of course opposed to linguistics, as linguistics does not allow jumping from one level to another: there are the phonologic, the morphologic and finally the syntactic level. Does politics as a means of gaining independence and national identity in the end respect this hierarchy in its surface structure? Is there a hierarchy in politics and policy making at all? Is it respected like it is in linguistics?

Hierarchy is of great importance in every process of creation. Everybody claims to have respected it. This is called a declarative statement in semiotics and logic. Charles Sanders Peirce said each proposition is logical if it respects the rules of Aristotelian syllogisms. "I have respected the hierarchy" is correct grammatically. The state is at the highest level. You have to respect the rules. To what extent is another question.

If one respects such a hierarchy, one discovers the national identity, as you are bound to hear very soon. It should be defended and protected by the state, it being the most high in the hierarchy. But it is not in our case. "A white nation," they say, "you are badly entitled to enjoy all the rights." Only chosen peoples deserve it, according to the internationally accepted standards. And what are the internationally accepted standards? What is internationalism?

How many people in the world enjoy their right to live or to be alive? Do I have that right?

Branka Buzovic:
Furka e shqiptarëve,
1990, Albanian
Drama Company of
the Theatre of
Nations, Skopje
photo: Sela Newkirk



I have read several reports on it, written essays on it. It is really difficult to find the answer. Some books say: "Europe is international, it has common laws, procedures and economy, so as to act as one." Others say: "No-one has the right to kill another person. The right to live is a natural and international and juridical right." How many people in the world enjoy their right to live or to be alive? Do I have that right? I'm sorry, but I don't have the book. I've just seen it, but nobody would like to put it in my possession; as a consequence, I'm afraid.

Building a national identity: a dystopian perspective

For you to identify yourself, there must exist a written record somewhere. Someone else has to affirm it administratively for you to know who you are. Otherwise there is no evidence that you are so and so, that your blood is of such and such colour. Semiotically speaking, the deep structure acts out of identity, nation and independence must be interrelated, so that we get the semantic features of the surface structure. All categorised items, speaking from the philosophical point of view, must be given names so that they would not remain categories only, just abstract items. All of them are naturally excluded from the concept of temporality, which Heidegger mentions so frequently. We are still within the realm of abstractions as hermeneutics says, no matter how much we would want to escape from the ad absurdum circle.

In order for all semantic features of identity to be deconstructed (in cyber parlance), deduced or transformed (frequently using philosophic and linguistic terms), some processes must take place. First you must know

the name of an identity. Nations have been given names. Some of them may be forbidden or a taboo in a given society. The name of my nation is such a case. Therefore it represents a dystopia.

The famous statement: "You want to exercise your national identity in an independent state," really comes closer to our analysis now. To forbid what someone has been trying to build for a century is a crime; although in my case an institutionalised crime. To quote another famous statement by a politician: "You must stick to your international beliefs; get rid of your national romanticism." A wise counsel, no doubt.

So, to sum up: if I cannot be a politician I shall try to find my national identity; that is the only option. As I am not able to be a politician, I choose the last option, the forbidden one.

There's priority, in our context, in being a human being; having the "forbidden" national identity comes second, and being international third. All of these must correlate.

Towards a conclusion: a semiotic perspective

Should a semiotician choose to analyse a political chaoticity of a nation, pairs like occupied-occupied, coloniser-colonised, national-international, would no doubt have to be seen as binary oppositions in a de Saussurean sense. One can analyse and interpret them in many ways. Mine is a simple one, but an expandable one as well: it allows for further interpretation. It is worth mentioning that the elementary semantic unit will be us be the dichotomy between utopia and dystopia; as the semiotic system grows, the Gollum-like relations of wanting and being are being established in this

way. You need concrete elements for this. Let's leave allegory and metaphor out and try to keep things simple, as they must be simple in order to get complex and complicated gradually.

The name of my nation is Albanian, but we are living in Macedonia. Under conditions of suppression and taboos of national identity, I feel like an absent structure, in Eco's terms. The paradigmatic characteristics are the name of a person, religion, persuasion, nation, national identity, cultural identity, etc. On the syntagmatic axis we have Ruler, Albanian, Muslim, literature, semiotics, etc. All of this should combine so as to create a semiotic system which will then be further able to communicate with another one. On the syntagmatic side we have living in a place officially called a state, which gives you all the benefits including medical, existential and professional ones. On the side of dystopia would be the taboos: existence, the right to exist and being an educated man. So what we have is the following

EDUCATED	UNEDUCATED
NON-OCCUPIED	OCCUPIED
NATIONAL	INTERNATIONAL
UTOPIA	DYSTOPIA

Many other characteristics could be put into this scheme, and then combined in an infinite trajectory of relations, as Greimas would say.

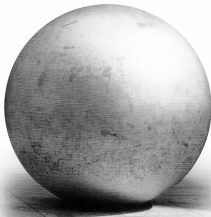
BILBAE ADUNA is a theatre director from Skopje, Macedonia



Željko
Serdanović: Takas

The End of Utopias...

José Monleón



Ivan Kolarik:
Grounded Sun

Utopia is an eschatology of the human predicament. What distinguishes us from other living beings might just, more than anything, be our utopian nature, our necessity to live in two times, and therefore in two worlds, that which we perceive through our senses and that constructed by our imagination. This contrast can use or interpret the present in the function of a project, giving the present a determined sense, filling it with meanings, which places the perceptible reality on the level of a different nature. The imaginary selects reality in order to transform it into a discourse that is poetic and, to a large extent, utopian. On other occasions, the imaginary dispenses with the present, regarding it as being purely mechanical, etched in a routine, with no other purpose than compliance with the determined factual order, and constructs its own reality outside present time and space, in a fabric made of memory and project, that would serve the double purpose of utopia and a dynamic referent, by means of which the present will acquire a meaning, will become inscribed in the process. If the eschatology, finally, situates the future in death, the imaginary intends to do it

through an active and singular expression of the subject, by means of which he could interpret, establish, the past and the present and project a desirable future. Understood in this way, the imaginary would constitute one of the great driving forces of individual or collective processes, a constant point of reference for the consciousness of its own personality or of the so-called national identity, as well as a stimulus and orientation in actions carried out on both levels. The imaginary would define a potential reality, operating organically within the subject, whether singular or collective, that determines decisively the processes, afterwards realised or frustrated, of transformation and change. Imagination of a certain future would be a fundamental requirement of its eventual realisation. In the sphere of Stalinist ideology, to imagine a person, appropriating his or her circumstances, is the actor's task. To imagine a person would suppose the application of a meticulous technique in order to represent it, from that organic integration in the imaginary of the actor, in a credible manner on stage.

Fantasy, on the contrary, would have a much more ambiguous character. One fantasises to avoid the immediate reality, not to subject

of reality - individual or collective - as it is, and often as a token of a sophisticated mind the capacity for detachment from it in order to dwell in a world - supposedly of the future in the case of a revolutionary fantasy, atemporal in the case of an artistic one - uncontaminated and illusory.

If for fantasy "everything is possible" - including the adjustment of the interpretation of history and the human predicament to the exigencies the ideological fantasy in question solicits - the imaginary has to fit together a bundle of causalities and circumstances, among which those that are "irremediable" - inscribed in a purely existential order - should be distinguished from those that are not - those that belong to the historical or social order. In other words, those made and unmade by human beings. To invoke the fatality of the social order in the name of the fatality of the existential order is an interested technique of refraining from affecting the "irremediable." Something, all in all, equally stupid as the appeal to the contingent nature of history, to the intervention of the human will in the creation of its circumstances, in order to avoid the inevitability of a series of misfortunes linked with human nature and independent of its will, such as death and transience to begin with. Before a project, whether personal or social, optimism or pessimism is becoming. Before the limits of existence, only evasion, desperation, or severity. It is significant that dogmas, whether religious or political, have raised doubts about tragedy, attributing it to incredulity or ignorance, i.e. to the rejection of the ideological systems that answer all questions and that the subject has but to implement blindly.

WHAT TO DO IN THE FACE OF OUR EVERYDAY REALITY?

In keeping with the above, we would have a series of options, mutually compatible or incompatible:

- To project, from the imaginary, a transformation of our personal reality.
- To project, integrating ourselves into the collective imaginary, a transformation of the social reality.
Or else:
a) To project, from the imaginary, a transformation of our personal reality.
- To project, from fantasy, a series of desirable or unsustainable situations, destined to function as a gratifying daydream with respect to personal or social reality.
Or else:
a) To project the overcoming of our existential constraints by means of transcendent answers, that are as such inevitably dogmatic, i.e. religious.

What Utopias?

in utopia, through which it is to be transcended. We live, after all, for a utopia that ought to vanquish the insupportable presence of death. Utopia, whether social or religious, individual or collective, in the end aspires to break the arbitrariness of human actions and the repetition of natural cycles, to give a different meaning to life, which, through the pursuit of utopia, would overcome the unbearable transience of human existence or of any action or deed, whether individual or political, on the part of human beings. The words would survive to the extent the utopia whencefrom and for which they were born would survive. And the individual, in itself, would lose its meaning and would become difficult to bear should the project, the utopia, that determines it be frustrated or turn out to be erroneous.

Perhaps this is the right moment to essay a precision - to put us on guard - in regards the meaning of the terms imagination and illusion or fantasy. The distinction comes from a Stalinist-like reflection and is important for establishing whether utopia belongs to the realm of the imaginary or of fantasy. For, although both terms are often used as synonyms, it seems useful and opportune to establish a difference in applying them to two concepts, partly related but profoundly antagonistic. Following that, the imaginary would consti-

tute a plan. Fantasy is an option that accepts its illusory character, its dissociation from action and from the obligations freely integrated in the realisation of the project. Fantasy is a consolation, a daydream; imagination is an exigency, dolorous at times, precisely because it is aware of the circumstances under which it operates. If the term "imaginary" has had great success, it is because it objectifies - at least semantically - an aspect of the human nature, an active area where the subject "creates" or "projects" a future reality. Fantasy, on the contrary, alludes to a passive vision, more of a consumption, on the part of the subject, inasmuch as fantasies are generally proposed to or imposed on him from without and exclude the type of inherent obligation his own imaginary actively implies. Fantasies would have to deplete the present, situating the subject in a happy future, either by means of an abrupt cut between the present and the future, or by preparing illusory processes of change, ruled by a voluntarism that leaves no room for choice or free will of the subject. Its sphere, in fact, is outside the actual space-time continuum of the subject and of his individual and organic project of the future, the place of which is to be taken by the fantasy proposed to him. Hence the deluding character of fantasy, which, in the name of an unrealty, invites to the acceptance

b) To project the overcoming of our social constraints through rectifying their causes, in other words, through political answers.

Or also:

a) To assume the project as a hypothesis, subject to verification and changes dictated by the praxis and subject to the dialectic confrontation of ideas.

b) To assume the project as a doctrine, that expresses the final and incontrovertible truth - revealed or scientific, on the existential or on the political level.

WHERE DO WE SITUATE UTOPIA?

1. Utopia should be distinguished from fantasy and from dogmatic imposition, inasmuch as it aspires to be a transformative project - which is not the case of fantasy, all its talk in "fashion" and "change" notwithstanding - and requires the participation and engagement of the extreme imaginary, both individual and collective, which is not true of dogmatic impositions, in the face of which there is only room for submission. Although dogma is to be distinguished from fantasy, for a doctrine is constructed as religious and/or political truth, while fantasy moves on the terrain claimed by the unreal, they are bound by a fundamental nexus: condemnation of the critical estimate of reality and of its confrontation with the dogmatic image. In other words, the sequent, in the case of a doctrine, that its addressees accept it fully, and even be prepared to die for it - regardless of whether he understands it or not, or perceives a series of contradictions - and, in the case of fantasy, to accept it without any active obligation whatsoever, for, in the end, it is destined to remain but a daydream, a marginal space or, even worse, an illusory project, where all the frustrations take shelter.

Inevitably, a religious or political dominant would, from the point of view of a corresponding doctrine, be seen as someone who rejects the truth and to the critical activity of the imaginary the notion of fantasy, of heterodoxy or unground dissent that does not affect the truth in the least, would, paradoxically, be attributed. That is to say, the project is not made or received by these destined to construct it, but is in the form of a doctrine already given and only requires that the faithful adhere to it. The approach that, on the level of religion, has certain arguments - faith and the superhuman essence of matter - at its disposal, turns out to be untenable in the case of a political construct.

2. Onto this scheme, a series of matrices is to be imposed. For it might happen that a doctrine, whether religious or political, be assumed by the individual or collective imaginary as a utopia, insofar as it would truly be recreated and accepted in the subject's knowing as an engagement freely chosen and not

as an instance of simple accession, although in the case of religions there is always the fundamental exaction, derived from the mysteries, where only absolute submission is possible. Supposedly, this "free submission" would be the wish of many a religious or political leader preaching his doctrine, but it is also evident that, in their historical practice, such doctrines prefer the imposition of a norm - of action or restraint - to the encounter with the inaugural, whether social or individual; or, to put it in other words, perhaps more fierce and precise, religious precepts are stronger than the presence of God, and the party slogans more binding than the political ideas whencefrom they emanate.

3. The superimposition of diverse projects - more specifically, religious and political - also contributes to the confusion. For when transcendent and social objectives are blended, a hierarchy is being introduced and the believer is tacitly urged to regard the latter as secondary with respect to the former. The horror and blood that humanity has paid and continues to pay in the name of religious invocations, is only explained by the loss of the sense of ethics and of social justice in the service of a cause superior to man. Thus, for instance, the attributive use of the word infidel has exceeded in cruelty that of the word enemy, because the offence to the true God, that every religion upholds, implies a dehumanization, a demoralization, that supposes a clash resulting from a conflict over land or of material interests. The "enemy" is an active concept, linked to an actual situation, that can be altered; the peoples that consider one another an "enemy," cease to do so when the historical reality is changed so as to rescind the causes of "enmity." Conversely, the "infidel" deserves to be condemned under any circumstances whatsoever and in perpetuity.

Where, then, should we situate the concept of utopia? If my reflection be accepted, I believe that in utopia the following elements should come together:

- A project of change - whether individual or social, although here we shall put the emphasis on the social or political utopia - assumed by the imaginary of a personal or collective subject.

- An open project, insofar as its construction should detect errors or contradictions of the approach, that would affect the process of bringing it about as well as the design of the ultimate objectives, instead of distorting the interpretation of facts in order to salvage the integrity of the initial project.

- A clear differentiation, therefore, with respect to fantasy and dogmatic imposition.

- Integration of the Project in an assembly of ideas, in turn inscribed in the history of thought, susceptible to ethical judgement, that

induces us to accept them freely and consciously.

It is important to specify that utopias cannot, in themselves, be valued as a positive contribution to individual or social reality. In our time, dominated by the extolment of the laws of the market and the assessment of human actions and ideas according to their economic performance, the word utopia automatically arouses sympathy among those who long for collective projects of nature other than materialistic. I believe at this point extreme caution is in order, for a fair share of the historical horrors, genocides and social discriminations, have had their origin in a series of utopias, actively assumed and executed by individuals. Or, to rephrase the point, when we discuss utopias we should not what utopias exactly we are referring to and analyse their objectives. The fact that thousands or millions of people are ready to die for a given utopia, to offer their lives in order to make it come true, does not warrant that the utopia in question supposes an advancement for the society as a whole. Neither should the magnanimity of the partisans be understood, just like that, as a desirable overcoming of the strictly utilitarian and economic criteria. We should examine for whom and how many the victims of every given utopia have fallen. The actual world - specifically, the whole Western world and those subject to its models - would have two unsatisfactory poles on the one hand, liberal recapitulation, with its mania of competitiveness at all costs and subsequent degeneration of the defeated, usually those who "compete" under less favorable circumstances, and on the other, the eclosion of a series of political, ethnic, or religious utopias, that, wielding "higher values," proclaims a perishment, including physical liquidation occasionally, for the enemies this utopia needs, when it does not end destroying, morally and physically, its own activists. In the history of the 20th century there are plenty of -isms, since accepted by vast social groups as an expiation of idealism and human spirit, that are nowadays remembered more for the corpses they left in their wake, than for their ideas and achievements.

ART AND UTOPIA

Is art a manifestation of the imaginary or of fantasy, if the differentiation expounded above be accepted? The immense majority of spectators who fill theatre or cinema halls, or attend concerts, or read books, or visit art galleries: do they seek to satisfy their imaginary, to expand their awareness of reality, to discover material for their utopia, or are they merely in search of a temporary diversion and oblivion of their everyday reality? Do they go back to it the same as they were when they left it, before

the experience of art, or does art have a bearing on their personality, transforming and enriching it in a way? It would be foolish to venture a categorical reply. Theatre, cinema, music, literature, painting, art, finally, can all be a revelation or remain but a pastime. What seems to be clear is that art is one thing and the entertainment industry something else, and that creators and spectators opt each time for one or the other, although they do not necessarily achieve what they are after. Whether do I believe that this question could be decided on by invoking the majority. The two ways will survive regardless of the number of partisans. The fact that thousands of films and theatre performances only aim to entertain the audience and reap economic benefits cannot wipe out of existence the history of the theatre and, more recently, of the cinema, that are part of the history of art, the works that have expressed, in artistic terms, the unexplained dimensions of the human predicament, the conflicts, the failures, the emotions, the ideas, the regressions, the utopia, that constitute the basis of our contemporary consciousness and that, to a large extent, owe to art their explicit existence, i.e. not only their birth but also the formal reasons by means of which they are constituted and defined.

This double and divergent interpretation of a literary fiction, or, in more general terms, of a work of art - a revelation or mere entertainment - is connected to the other confrontation, linked with what we have expounded above as regards imagination and fantasy. What is the function of art? Is it an explication, peripheral with respect to reality, an invention aimed at creating an alternative world, where to take refuge from time to time in order to evade the cruelty of this one? Is there a sharp distinction between reality and fiction, or does, on the contrary, the latter, by means of formal devices specific to art, provide a profound explication of the former? Could it perhaps be said that art - and, therefore, fiction - is a more reliable image of an era, or, on the contrary, that it is a travesty of it, something of a "trip" or "escape," the reason for existence of which is precisely dissociation from reality? Should we then take reality to be nothing more than detailed statements of politicians, weekly maps, the index of unemployment, income per capita, dispatches, local chronicles, family economy, sexual experiences, results of football matches, number of traffic accidents, profits of banks, power struggles, romances of the humor, and the like? Does fiction exist merely to liberate us from that aggressive coexistence and offer us an arbitrary sphere of freedom?

Obviously, at more time, there are no definite answers. Fiction can be a manifestation - for the creator and the recipient alike - of fantasy or an endeavour of the imaginary. In the

first case, as we have seen, we would, in fact, be dealing with a creation aimed at the gratification of its consumer audience. This was and continues to be the view of the conservative mind that falls into the error of invoking in the defence of the relation between reality and art something like the demand for an art that would "reproduce" reality. Henceforth, the arguments in favour of an escapist fiction are as easy to find as they are false. The argument would, more or less, go like this: "If we live in a reality which, apart from finding it unpleasant, we also know very well, why do we need a novel, a play, or a film to reproduce it? Books, screenplays, and screens are, have always been, meant to serve other purposes: precisely, to make possible, outside reality, what it does not permit. Journalism and other forms of conveying information have a function completely different from that of fiction."

As always, the problem with this kind of argument, that can easily be explained to be in the service of certain interests and ideas - if the world has always been a catastrophe, if the human being is naturally selfish and cruel, what is the point of changing the way things are? Would it not be more sensible, and safer, to try to create a fictional world free of the circumstances that vex our quotidian existence and make the sentiments and principles we like prevail, unconstrained by setbacks of any sort? - is that it aspires to be applied to the meaning of art in general, or, to be more precise, to fiction insofar as this is the stuff plays, films and novels are made of.

For it is certain that from the fifth century before Christ down to our time there has existed a series of works, starting with the Greek classics, to use the example of the theatre, the aim of which was neither to reproduce the world nor to evade it, but to represent it, which is a different thing altogether. It means to use fiction to reveal and organize a series of dimensions and levels of individual existence and social life that were obscure. The history of human thought and sentiment is, more than anything, a complex sequence of "fictions" that, far from inviting us on a trip of little consequence, have proposed to take us to the very "centre," in order to enable us to understand ourselves and the better to make sense of the causes of the predicament the dreamers deem fatally cruel and unalterable.

There would, then, seem to exist the entertainment industry, that apparently uses the same languages as the works of art - just as words have through the centuries been used to write the Orestes and the Quixote as well as the most banal of comedies and novels - and the thousands-of-years-old endeavour to turn the imaginary into an instrument of poetry, of revelation of one world behind another, of understanding and awareness.

The fact that thousands or millions of people are ready to die for a given utopia, to offer their lives in order to make it come true, does not warrant that the utopia in question supposes an advancement for the society as a whole



The Spanish playwright Federico García Lorca wrote in his essay "The Audience" ["El público"] of the "theatre in the open air" - the regular theatre, including many of the texts considered great from the academic point of view - confined to the prestidigitator, who creates the illusion of producing a hare from an empty top hat, and of the other theatre, the "theatre beneath the sands," indefinable, difficult to stage, waiting latently, clandestine and profoundly real, to be expressed through words, images, metaphors, characters and situations that do not belong to known language.

What did the students in the French May of '68 mean when they wrote "Power to the Imagination" on the walls? Surely they were alluding to that plethora of life projects forged in the imaginary and expressed in so many literary texts, including poems and fiction. In all that literature that has been labeling about life, that has transformed it, not in order to forget it but in order to enrich it, to reveal it, to show, consciously or unconsciously, the necessity of changing it.

Be it gushed, then, that fiction is, in many instances, only a consolatory disposition of fantasy, but, that at its best it is a creation of the imaginary that brings us closer to the underlying reality, the human reality, comprised, among other things, of desires and projects.

I wonder, in conclusion, whether the history of art is not the only credible history of human utopia, of the world inquired into by men and women who have endeavored to objectify and communicate it.

UTOPIA, IDEOLOGY AND POWER

The concept of utopia is usually applied to the models of social organization that project themselves into the future. Closed models, where everything is explained and whose each thing has its place forever. From Plato's Republic to the magnification, less regularizing but equally "definitive," of liberal democracy undertaken by the American Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History* (and the last Man), many a text has designed the ideal city, the final goal of social development.

Nevertheless, it might be advisable to distinguish the inventions of philosophers and poets, as in the case of Plato, analyses of history drawn in a certain ideological perspective, and the proposals offered as political programmes, that demand action and entail the "seizure of power," that guarantees its realization and protection. In the first instance, they stay within the bounds of speculation, highly charged with fantasy, in other words, remain a subject of intellectual debate, with little or no chance of affecting society as a whole. In the second, they are no more than apologies, more or less intelligent and documented, of a given

ideology, in the name of which the facts are interpreted and distorted so that a desired conclusion be effected; every ideology to have had any kind of social influence - including, of course, the religious ones, that have always blended the next world with this one, whether because the doctrine in question demands it, as in the case of Islam, or because the relation between the two worlds has projected itself beyond the mandate granted it, as in the case of Catholicism - had at its disposal a vast apologetic machinery, that included not only studies and theoretical analyses but immeasurable works of fiction as well. Ideologies, mutually antagonistic, fought not only by means of political action and arms, but also by means of propaganda, extolling its principles and condemning those who opposed them, never losing sight of power.

Since Communism and capitalism were, over various decades, the two models of society antagonistically proposed to the largest part of the world, I believe it would be difficult to assign to any of them the character of a social utopia, although that is no doubt what the social groups or parts of society who were supposed to and did benefit from one or the other system did consider them. Maybe liberal capitalism was because it seems less dogmatic and implies the individual imaginary in terms its enemy did not. When one talks today to the people who have lived under Communist regimes - in the countries of the so-called Eastern bloc - it is not inept to encounter the praise of various initiatives aimed at the common good alongside a vehement rejection, which is a consequence of the annulment of the individual by the programme, of the dogmatic imposition that proved to be incompatible, as a medium-term objective, with the participative concept, already alluded to, of utopia. Above all, and this seems to me a crucial point, when utopia, the sacrifice of the present in the name of future prosperity, was being defended from the position of Power, i.e. when the "objective circumstances" already existed for it to make its objectives clear. The very fact that the appropriately named "utopian socialism" aroused enthusiasm and acquired the status of historical hope, to be eventually frustrated by "real socialism," i.e. by the objective possibility of its realization, is symptomatic.

In fact, Communism had the character of utopia, in the full sense of the term, in societies governed by capitalism, or, even more so, in those ruled by Fascism. Just like, by the same token, liberal capitalism possessed utopian allure for societies under Communism. In both cases, the critique of reality and power was being translated into a yearning for the antagonistic social model so that it could, even, paradoxically, be said that each bloc was a promoter of the adversary utopia. Out of the

societies that had been subjected to Fascism have perhaps risen those that believed with more faith and commitment in the Communist utopia of a classless society, basically because the abuses of power and social injustices they experienced first-hand corresponded to the regimes that proclaimed themselves anti-Communist, just like it was in the Communist societies, where more people believed in the existence of a world governed by the respect for the individual and the free market, alien to their immediate reality, which demonstrated to what extent both those principles could be diminished in practice by a series of laws and criteria that placed the hegemony of the State in the hands of small groups or cliques that dominated the economy, mediated all information, placed individual ideals in a hierarchy, controlled the culture, dictated and magnified the consumption, and all this for their own benefit, generally under the auspices of the State whose liberalization was, simply, the legal framework that such groups or forces needed. The liberators of the East includes forces that speak of this yearning for freedom and the possibilities of capitalist countries. Membership prevented the publication of many such texts, penetrating their authors. But even so, capitalism managed to assure the circulation of a number of those texts in the West, some of which were severe and extraordinary, like Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, while some were more elementary, focusing on the opposition between the refinement and freedom of consumption in the West and the vulgar gregariousness of the State organized consumption, as can be seen in Ninotchka and in the novel *We Who Live by Ayn Rand*. A whole literature whose capitalism attains the condition of utopia.

The West too, but it be believed otherwise, had its literature where the Soviet Union and the socialist countries were presented as utopias, as a superior social model that did away with discrimination and economic exploitation. The weight of the doctrine of solidarity and social justice was considerable, certainly because in the western countries it was not linked to the idea of Power, on the contrary.

In many countries, for instance in Italy, where Christian Democrats are in power, to be a Communist implied a place in the opposition, in some cases with a certain amount of power, but for the vast majority of the partisans it was only a way to feel themselves a part of a project, assumed, in the sense we have given the term, as a utopia, i.e. as a desirable social model that can be brought about in the future. In others, like the United States or the Spain of the longed-for Franco dictatorship, to declare oneself a Communist, or to invite the suspicion of being one, implied a series of risks that ranged from being sacked to going to jail or into exile. Subscribing to the Communist

utopia, making it a guiding light of one's actions and political thinking, not only did not grant privileges - as it did in the countries where Communism was in power - but was a form of sacrifice, freely chosen by its partisans or supporters.

The deterioration of that utopia began in the West long before the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the liquidation of the Communist regimes in the countries of the East. Even when a large part of the anti-Soviet testimonies were being received with distrust - because they tied in perfectly with the official anti-Communist discourse, just like the anti-capitalist testimonies were a means of propaganda in the Communist countries -, the evidence began to pour forth, above all from the Krastchev era analyses of Stalinism and the 20th Congress of the Communist Party onward.

To little effect have the last Secretaries General tried to silence the past. Stalin's purges, the gulags, the testimonies of Solzhenitsyn, the exemplary behaviour of the dissidents, the execution and exile of the artists who did not accept social realism - at this point let us draw attention to the fact that the awareness of the fate that befell two great names of the Soviet stage, the unspeakable execution of Meyerhold and the frightened subservience of the old Stanislavski, living in self-imposed isolation in his house in Moscow, disturbed profoundly many a Communist supporter in the theatre -, the distance separating the Party from the rest of society, the substitution of political thinking by State propaganda, of the critical debate by mass parades in the Red Square, the disparity between being a global power and having the immense majority of the population living in poverty, the omnipotence of the KGB, the imposition of Soviet imperialism upon the international union of the proletarian, etc., etc., were clearing the way for Gorbachev, making him as inevitable as he was lethal to the history of "real socialism" that began in 1917.

And thus did the texts born out of this disenchantment, or discovery of the reality underlying the political theory that, for a while, seemed nourished by scientific analysis and ethics, begin to populate Western literature. Communism, through historical materialism, had, for many people in the West, the three-fold character of the inescapable future, of scientific rationality, and of a model of social justice, with the appealing bonus of going beyond local or national boundaries in order to achieve the character of a universal programme - an attainable utopia. Hence the almost religious idealisation of Communism - in spite of it being materialistic and anti-religious by definition - and the bitterness at discovering what things really were like, both in the Soviet Union and in the so-called satellite countries, generally run by the Secretary General of the

respective Communist Party, who in turn followed orders from Moscow. The Venezuelan Ignacio Cabreria's play *The Day You Want Me (El día que me quieras)* is perhaps one of the works that best express the pathos and puerility of that idealised vision, so far removed from reality, of the Communist utopia, as seen from a Latin American country dominated by the horrendous inequality of the social classes and the power of its oligarchies.

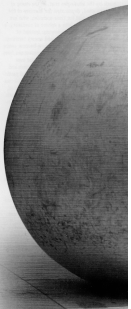
So that such bloc, relying on an economic and ideological model, offered as the best possible, and assumed by many living in the opposed bloc to be a tempting utopia, took it upon itself to destroy the model that the majority of individuals and peoples found acceptable. The word politics has been culminated by both parties - and the process of devaluation continued in the democracies, after the fall of the Berlin wall, through the spread of corruption, in various countries and with various political forces in charge - and the individual distrusted any proposal whatsoever that invoked the common good or general interest. Those that once used to be considered utopias of hope, were now deemed demagogic chicanery, fantasies of dubious moral, bound to legitimate oppression, and the great majority of human beings were getting ready to approach life as if it were a ruthless combat. In the end the brutality was out and no one had any reasons to conceal it.

The process could perhaps be summed up in the following scheme: utopia - participation - ideological schematisation - seizure of power - submission required - autocracy - disenchantment.

Does that mean that utopias of social justice and individual freedom have disappeared? Does the fiasco of their last two ideological systematisations - whatever Fukuyama or those nostalgic about Communism might say - imply they have been done away with for good?

The answer must be an emphatic no, because both concepts, that of personal freedom and that of social justice, are deep rooted in our consciousness and have constituted the nourishment of the most noble utopias that have kept people going through the centuries. Let us, therefore, conclude that the two ideological systematisations have indeed collapsed, but that the principles remain, demanding new concepts of political action, new reconciliations, that would contribute to bringing them about, perhaps starting with a transformation of the concept and practice of power, that has assumed negative overtones on the account of its exclusive character with respect to the society as a whole - everybody knows that in the corridors of power a simple vote in periodic elections does not mean participation in political life, and that new structures of participation ought to be created, reasonable, equally removed from assemblies and the remoteness

In fact, new political frontiers are being established to substitute the old ones, and they are being imposed with the same dogmatic fervour, the same exigency to be accepted in their totality, with no room for criticism or dissent



of power - and of the arrogance demonstrated by many of its administrators.

In principle - and I guide myself on being one of those who stated that repeatedly, in various congresses, to the attainment of the disenfranchised and of the orphans of political catechism - the crisis of great dogmas entails the gain of a new individual freedom, the possibility for every human being to assume the responsibility of contributing to the construction of utopia, to face the world without the aid of any dubious booklet - red, blue, or white - containing all the answers and all the interpretations. I believe it was thus understood by vast numbers of people gathered in NGOs, in various foundations, and around cultural, artistic, technical or scientific undertakings, governed by the principle of solidarity, which is tantamount to respect for singularity - how could the term solidarity have been used as much by the ideologues that, in the name of common good, deprecated the identity of the individual? - and for their societies, who are turning others into a sphere of cordiality, a regard of world worth knowing, instead of regarding it as an inferno and enemy territory. The democratic parties must now become aware of this change and alter their programmes from mere power struggle manuals, for the ever greater glory and benefit of their leaders and patriars, into spheres of encounter and participation in the development of major social concepts, in the creation of new feasible utopias, that would pay attention to flagrant economic and other conflicts, in the heart of every community and in the human societies seen as a whole.

Unfortunately, the crisis of political catechism that have originated in recent decades was made the most of by certain groups who have proposed narrow ideological schemes in the old ones' stead. As a rule, they burnt onto the stage in the guise of great utopias, capable of filling the vacancy left by the orphans of catechism and satisfying the utopian nature of humans we referred to at the beginning of this essay.

Religious, national and ethnic fundamentalisms, interpreted sometimes, as the proposal that, a series of historical circumstances being favorable, have come to pass first and have sown seeds and corpses around the world. Once more, their dynamics was that of planning the future, disregarding completely the price and the moral, not to mention criminal, pervercity entailed in their march toward the objectives difficult to attain, or, when stripped of fanatic idealization, hollow and unsatisfactory.

In fact, new political frontiers are being established to substitute the old ones, and they are being imposed with the same dogmatic fervor, the same exigency to be accepted in their totality, with no room for criticism or dis-

sent. Once again, thinking is being replaced by dogma, concepts by symbols, rational communication by the impact of shock-value images inducing compulsion and emotional reaction. Individuals and groups are being towed by a dialectic that always starts from the absolute claim to truth and the implacable condemnation of those who do not adhere to it. The ultimate objective is none other than the reversal of the identities of the victims and the executioners, without inquiring into the reasons for their existence.

But what of utopia understood as a long-term project, shared and recreated freely by a number of individuals, integrated in the social dynamics and driven by a desire to construct a better and more just world, where is it today? Probably where it always has been: in all those who have clashed with the promise of distant paradises, to the future existence of which the very essence, i.e. the critical spirit, of the exercise of the imaginary, the conciliation of personal freedom and the common good, had to be sacrificed.

For some countries, especially those that have, for various reasons of history, been living in isolation, the idea of the European Community, now European Union, used to be a great hope. In short, it was a project that went beyond the defensive and political schemes of the League of Nations - to avoid war between its members, to procure a peaceful solution, reached by negotiating, of their conflicts - and aimed at the creation of a new concept of everyday coexistence of the Europeans. The fact that economy played a major part in the project was not only logical, but also desirable, for economy has, beneath a motley of arguments, including those invoking grand ideals, really been the fundamental reason for the conflict. The problem was - still is - that the great part of the society could only conceive of political economy as a means to the correction of the causes of violence and never - as it must certainly be for the multinational comparison and the masters of finance - as an end in itself. What is lacking for the European Union to become a shared utopia, the project of coexistence that stimulates and obtains the participation of the imaginary - and, thus, the engagement - of the Europeans, is a more profound and developed sense of solidarity, political chicanery in the service of national interests - the most powerful countries always prevailing, of course - to be superseded by respect for all peoples. Something, no doubt, difficult to attain, in an era when "exclusive" nationalisms - the adjective should highlight the distinction between the legitimate affirmation of national identity when confronted with colonialism of any sort, military, economic, or cultural, and the nationalism that affirms itself, overpowering in the vice it attributes to its enemies, by means of regarding as an enemy any-

one who refuses to partake of that concept of identity, that is in the least instance manipulated, dogmatic and removed from reality - have resurged in many places as an emotional argument controlling the thoughts and behavior of the citizens. Perhaps at this moment in time the European Union is in reality an unsatisfactory programme, responsible for the death of thousands of emigrants, who, coming from the poorest countries, intended to cross its borders, while simultaneously being a utopia wherein many of history's greatest wrongs might be made right. The problem lies in the question whether and to what extent will thought - culture - be an important factor or just a nuisance for those who see the European Union solely as an instrument of affirming, at less cost and with greater profit, the present distribution of power. The attention, though it be minimal, that the European Union pays to culture and to the Euro-Mediterranean relations, and the gradual increase of the number of its members are two encouraging facts.

Perhaps the patient reader who has come this far thinks that my proposal - a new international order, based on the transformation of the societies and mutual respect and deep rooted in the participative concept of power - will remain but a utopia. That, in effect, is how it is. Its name and formulation have been different through the ages and in various socio-cultural contexts. But it continues to be our majority and the driving force of many inhabitants of the planet - of the so-called civil society, an old term recovered with significant enthusiasm - to rebel against both the anthropopathic vision of the social relations and of the human predicament - man is a wolf to man, and should not miss a single opportunity to devour another human being - and the false utopia that do not go beyond the condition of aggressive fantasies in the service of power. Yesterday, today, but not necessarily tomorrow.

Universal brotherhood is an ancient utopia, that managed to get incorporated into many of humanity's religious and political creeds. The fact that it has been perpetually betrayed by the patriars or followers of these very doctrines or ideologies has not diminished its value. It is more likely to have been increased. There it is, waiting, like some great utopia that continues to move the most noble human beings all over the globe.

Translated from the Spanish by Fomilux Brink

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QUEST FOR THE WOMEN'S UTOPIA

СВОБОДА + С

I knew the stuff that savage dreams are made of.
(Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman, *Herland*, 1915)
Passion holds women in the most terrible captivity.
(Alexandra Kollontai, *Novaya zhenshchina*, 1913)

Andrea Feldman

Utopia has always inspired feminists. The idea of a No Land or Never Land that has acquired its name from the Greek *ou topos* was already in the seventeenth century understood as a principle of the optimal society. It included not only a vision of space, but general programs and platforms for ideal societies, together with codes and constitutions and the rules of governing. A concern about the existence of the female utopia arose with the emergence of female political and ideological demands of the nineteenth century. Even if Karl Marxheim had perceived utopia as detached from ideology, and superimposed onto historical reality, it has been argued that utopia was a phenomenon with an ideological content. Its "inner reality" rests with the fact that it has been contemplated and thought over. The question, therefore, is not whether the women's utopia existed at all, but how did it relate to the general utopian thought of its male counterparts?

One of the leading theorists of the "first wave feminism" Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) was a writer and an advocate of economic independence for women. Born in a

dysfunctional New England family, Gilman experienced fatherless childhood. The hardship of her mother, whose major concern was how to survive and support her children without a husband, inspired Gilman to develop ideas about the need for women's economic independence in her book *Women and Economics*. A frequent contributor to the *American Journal of Sociology*, she used a mixture of theories like social Darwinism, anarchism and socialism to explain the women's subjugation as an unnatural aberration. Her utopian novel *Herland*, published in 1915 in the midst of the Great War, presents a gynocentric ideal of a far away country of women only, who reproduce by parthenogenesis and organize as efficient, self-sufficient and environmentally safe society. A land of a semitropical, first-rate climate, is a state of perfect cultivation, with roads "sloped slightly to shed rain, with every curve and grade and gutter as perfect as if it were Europe's best." The utopian quality that was assigned to patriarchy in the nineteenth century is at least in part due to the work of Johann Jakob Bachofen, a Swiss historian

whose *Dur Maternrecht* provided information about development of matrilineal societies in the past. These men, three explorers who stumble on the all-female society are meant to represent three different views on dealing with the problems that were clearly present in a world immersed in war. Among the three of them only Jeff Margrave, "born to be a poet, a botanist - or both" managed to fit in Berlin, since his sensitivity and "Southern chivalry" prepared him in the best way for the perplexities of an all-women society. The archetypal machine of Terry O. Nicholson does not allow much prospect and will cause him only problems and disappointment, whereas, the "scientific objectivity" of Randyek Jennings, a sociologist, totally in accord with Gilman's ideological blend of socialist, anarchist and Darwinist concepts, offers a possibility of a new world that would eventually emerge out of the contact of two civilizations. In Gilman's assessment, for a civilization to realize its highest potential, it is necessary to draw on the full range of human resources.

Feminist stipulation of Charlotte Perkins Gilman was informed greatly by the work of Edward Bellamy, editor of a newspaper in Springfield, Massachusetts, and the author of *Looking Backward*, a utopian novel that was (like the works of William Morris, the Russian, pre-Raphaelite) read and admired by more people in nineteenth century than the works of Karl Marx, Saint-Simon, Fourier and Comte combined. Their Victorian socialism followed the early commitment to the ideas of solidarity, humanity and brotherhood of men.

It is interesting to note that Bellamy's novel had no difficulties crossing geographical and ideological borders as it was published in Russia in 1891, and by 1918 there were seven Russian translations with 50,000 copies sold. His vision of the superindustrial society was assimilated into the Communist propaganda after the Russian Revolution.

The Revolution that has defined the twentieth century and proceeded to change lives of so many people certainly had a recognizable female utopian quality to it. Along with the political, social and economic changes, the everyday life had to be renewed. The process of radical change applied to the most intimate spheres of life. The mores of the New People changed with them in sometimes bizarre, if original, fashions. The seasonal rebellion of the Doves with Shaw movement advanced the idea that the only truly democratic dress was the human skin itself. Its members organized nude marches and evenings of the Devoted Body during which they paraded their nakedness in public, much to the amazement of the onlookers and the police. Following the example of Lenin and Krupskaya, who were the plainest dresser, fashion artists designed egalitarian new clothing, favoring black dresses for

women, and soldiers and peasant uniforms for men. Among the women leaders, only Alexandra Kollontai, the feminist member of the Bolshevik government of 1917, stuck to her fashionable wardrobe. In the Bolshevik tradition that favored a traditional Russian peasant community - *mir*, Russian students and intellectuals dressed like peasants and went to form peasant communes, where they were supposed to share the property, as well as the obligations and everyday chores. They did not succeed since they have incited a lot of hostility on the part of the real peasants, not inclined to the experiments of that kind. On the other hand, the urban consensus of the 1920s included diverse people and showed a remarkable interest in the issues of gender equality. New laws that were introduced in 1919 insisted on the equal rights of the sexes in case of a divorce, and as a great sign of the times changing, abortion became free and legal. To no small extent, this was accomplished by the fashionable Alexandra Kollontai. The most prominent woman leader, a diplomat, and the only member of the first Bolshevik government who has survived the later purges, Kollontai was engaged in women's issues from the beginning of her days in politics. Her essay *The New Woman* (1913) argues for the novel type of woman that would emerge out of the revolution. What was new about her "new woman"? Kollontai was very much aware of the fact that feminism in Russia did not start with the revolution. On the contrary, feminism or "a very strong bourgeois women's movement" actually ended in Russia when the Bolsheviks came to power. The historian Richard Stiles provided a trustworthy record of the scope and diversity of women's movements in Russia throughout the 19th century. While not yet firmly in power, however, the Bolsheviks needed women as a traditional mobilizing force to strengthen their position during the Civil War period. Women did take part in the revolutionary activities. The first years of the Revolution were, in Kollontai's words: "... so rich in magnificent shimmers, plans, ardent initiatives to improve life, to organize the world anew, months of the real romanticism of the Revolution..."

The idea of the New Woman represents the independent, free and single woman, who is totally capable of ruling her life and participating in the life of the community. Kollontai, herself an ardent feminist and libertarian, emphasizes the point of separate male and female identities and tries to merge the ideas of sexual liberation with the idea of female emancipation as proclaimed by the socialist state tactics. The idea that women were no longer "the object of tragedies centered on men but had become the subjects of their own independent tragedies" did not connect very well to the demands of the new society. Although her ideas of sexual liberation did not satisfy

the stern Bolsheviks (Lenin trashed her for what he understood as advocating promiscuity) Kollontai proceeded to express her view of love, which on the lower, casual level she called a *wisples* *dos*. In contrast to it, as the highest expression of love, she conceived the ideal of *love play*, the idea of a *wisples* *dos*. This intense, tender and not constraining kind of love comradeship, necessarily had to clash with the stern and ascetic face of early Communism. Her dreams and visions about the ultimate liberations remained utopian, indeed.

Although the late stories were the years of bloom in Yugoslavia, the *štre* *révolutions* of 1968, a utopian rebellion of short duration did not circumvent it. What was its character? Was it only "a student imitation of Parisian *knosovs*," as Croatian writer Miroslav Kolača somewhat referred to it? Was it a reaction to the European student movements, an attempt to follow fashion or was it a sign of dissatisfaction with the Yugoslav developments? Although there were several student protests in Yugoslavia in the fifties, they were quickly forgotten, and an attempt has ever been made to refer to the continuity of the student movement in the period after World War II. The student movement in Yugoslavia was a marginalized movement without any real political strength, but in Belgrade in 1968, Zagreb in 1971, as well as in Pribitina in 1981 (and even in 1988, but nobody paid any attention) it was a sign of a change to come.

What started as a spontaneous revolt, because the students were not allowed to see a theater performance without tickets, developed into a University strike that disturbed Belgrade for seven days. Belgrade was covered with posters cheering for Golič-Bendić, for J.P. Sartre, for Che Guevara and for Mao. Miro Tripala, a Croatian politician, stated in his memoirs that the student movement of 1968 was a manifestation of a crisis that Yugoslavia was going through in the late sixties, even if it started as a clear case of youthful bohemianism, with a striking resemblance to the Paris incidents. Tripala (like Ljiljana Perović and other representatives of the liberal line in Yugoslav politics) maintains that the students were organized and led by extreme leftist groups connected with urban and Stalinist forces. The students' dissatisfaction with the development of socialism, their criticism of social inequality, the increasing bureaucratization, high unemployment and wide social differentiation caused by what they perceived as the uncontrolled introduction of market mechanisms in the name of authentic self-management did indeed contain a certain iconoclastic *štur*. The radical student movement reached its apogee with the occupation of the Belgrade University, renamed the "Rad University Karl Marx." The June demands were addressed to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, accurately

Understood by the students as the only Yugoslav political body capable of instilling change. They insisted on the elimination of social inequalities, the introduction of economic reforms and the solving of the problems of the unemployed. The students affirmed their trust in self-managing socialism, the politics of non-alignment, social property, they attacked the inclination to get rich, and any symptoms of capitalism. Ultimately, their program was "the program of the most progressive forces of the society - the program of the Communist Party." What President Tito did on the June 9, 1968 when speaking to the students via the Belgrade media was not to call their bluff; even simpler than that, it was seriously just another sermon to the converts. He was happy to have such working class, and also such wonderful youth, that proved to be mature. After all, President Tito knew what he was doing when in April of the same year he recorded

"Student," the Belgrade student newspaper and the voice of the rebellion, the highest Yugoslav civilian award, the medal of Brotherhood and Unity with a Golden Wreath. He agreed to their demands and promised to give them a serious thought soon. He asked them to go back to their studies and prepare for exams. "It would be a real pity if you lost more time!" he said in the famous address. The speech resulted in exhilaration. Many students who liked it, enthusiastically danced in the streets of Belgrade; they were reassured. They were so happy that they decided to provide security for Tito's passage through Novi Beograd on his way in and from the airport. They got red ribbons and under the supervision of the police and the state security, they prepared for his passage. The police was happy as well; the students proved worthy of their confidence. As for the victims of the police and state security brutalities during the student strike there were 136 students hurt, and 5 stayed in Belgrade hospitals according to "Student." Two men were sentenced to prison sentences: Vlada Mijanović (Vlade Revolucija) and Lazar Stojanović, a movie director whose *Plastični Džon* (The Plastic Jesus) disturbed some censors—and who knows—perhaps even Tito himself.

The crucial consequence of the student actions in Belgrade in 1968 was that they undermined the possibility of a political change in Serbia which was proposed by the Serbia's only truly liberal leadership of Miroslav Mikelić and Ljiljana Perović in the years following Ranković's fall. Advancing the idea of "the modernization of Serbia," the Serbian liberals decided to create a Serbia which would be grounded in a sound industrial framework, and able to compete with other republics on an equal footing, and without any hegemonic aspirations. This implied that simultaneously with the economic reform, the Yugoslav polit-

Women were never prominent student leaders and women students were frequently, as was the custom during those hot revolutionary days, treated as the comfort of revolutionaries.



cal system ought to be changed, too. The problem also being that Tito's authoritarian position had to be challenged. The fact remains that the leaders of the reformed socialist fractions of both Serbian and Croatian Communist Parties (1967-1972) were women, Latinka Perović and Sushka Dubučević-Kalaš. Energetic, smart, intelligent and independent, these two women represented the best the doomed socialist ideology had to offer. The students in Belgrade were certainly not the only reason for the failure of the attempt to reform socialism, but their rebellion provided Tito with a major argument to stave his opponents.

What was the most important legacy of the student movement? Although they would probably not like to consider themselves heirs to the student movement, founders of the feminist movement in all successor states of former Yugoslavia admitted that the initial push for feminist initiatives occurred after the experience of the student rebellion of 1968. In many ways feminism in Yugoslavia actually appeared to be contrary to certain practices and ideologies of the student movement. As a close reading of either Belgrade or Zagreb student press would show, women's issues were never so much as mentioned by the leaders of the movement. Women were never prominent student leaders and women students were frequently, as was the custom during these not revolutionary days, treated as the consort of revolutionary

The only reference I found in the Belgrade newspaper "Student" was "A Festive Recommendation to the More Equal Sex" by Milojko Majstorovic in celebration of the International Women's Day in March of 1968. In those days when no passion was spent on political correctness, the text read like this:

"Good-bye women! Up yours! Down with the terror! Down with your arrogant breasts! Down with the clothes! Down with the contempt of my realities! Down with the wrinkles! Down with your awareness of the freedom of copulation! Down with immorality! Down with the female gender!"

And if a mobile reader would like to consider this an anchor without, let me reassure them that no such outcasts were to be found, against either the authorities or the State, not to mention Thö's authority. Such blatant sexist attitudes certainly left a mark on the generation of women who matured during the events of 1968 and 1971. Along with a responsibility for the offspring of the Revolution, women inherited the resistance to the understanding of politics as something more important, better than life itself. Out of that came in the late seventies and early eighties the urge to understand the everyday life as a foundation for an open political action and they proceeded to establish a network of women's groups, which as a base of its actions defined broader understanding of gender related issues, tolerance, coexistence and principle of solidarity.

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Secret Knowledge on the Playboy Centerfold or: Political Correctness as a Contemporary Utopia

Ideology has to have some cognitive and utopian features in order to appeal to individuals. ... Ideology presents historically constructed conditions as natural, as common sense and the way things are, as if it were natural for Rambo to slaughter hundreds of individuals and then to turn on the state and its computers.

Douglas Kellner
(1995:111-112)

Let us follow the above footprints: Ideology aims to manipulate and frame our **knowledge**; to persuade us rhetorically that certain political figure stands as a substitute, metonymy, for "our" standards and "our" decisions, and that by public actions s/he will fulfill "our" utopian needs. In democratic western societies, we vote for the one who offers no less than The Ideal Concept of future government. In reality, the utopian candidate acts like an average marketing manager, with one difference only: s/he does not sell property, s/he sells the political Promised Land. Do we believe in the candidate's narrative? In the words of Frederic Jameson (1978: 144): people are more willing to settle for a special kind of a "fantasy bribe" and put their trust and their feelings (the former being especially important in war propaganda) into the hands of a carefully presented Ideal Leader, than to participate personally in the political process or impeach politicians because of their unfilled promises. We enjoy not being responsible, just as we choose to be dazzled by beautiful social projections; otherwise there would be serious problems in accepting a globally cherished idea of Destination Heaven. Those who create literary utopias, on the other hand, share a common belief that knowledge could be used not only for subconscious anesthesia and venting for distant paradises, but just as much for "mind awakening" purposes. The Babylonian Temple once stood for the community of educated humans. Plato (Plato's Republic) elaborated on the teachings of his tutor Socrates, Thomas More (Utopia) and Franz Petrus (Happy City) were the Renaissance erudites writing about perfected social conditions. Shakespeare's hero Prospero (The Tempest) deals with magical books filled with secret knowledge, Aldous Huxley made his Island an oriental oasis of enlightened citizens. It is no wonder, then, that the term "political correctness", the famous newborn of American universities (literature departments), shows to have so much in common with the wishful humanistic attitude that **knowledge** in terms of social power equates army force, accumulation of wealth or influence of religion. Of course, literary utopias are just as exclusive as military or theological ones: only the privileged get to be "improved" (Plato ordered not only poets, but also Socrates and Pericles out of his Res Publica), disharmony and disproportion are all-time marks of utopian thinking: only the chosen get to enter the Better World, the actual Res Publica, where the destiny of "the rest of the crowd" will be decided. And only because this world is a mess, the utopians long for a Brave New One to replace it. I do not see important semantic differences between utopias created by writers or politicians. In both cases the team should be translated not as no-place but preferably as the exclusive "replacement" of power. To think utopian further more implies reaching the golden age with no transitory troubles: a mistreated frog tonight, as implying hell tomorrow morning. True utopians deeply dislike doing things gradually. The idea of accepting personal responsibility for failures committed is similarly alien to the utopian understanding of "improvement". It is Munchausen who gets elected for the western utopia: wherever he wants to go, he gets there immediately and effortlessly by flying on a cannon bullet. On a smaller scale, during its 15-30 seconds of duration, a TV commercial operates with the same utopian features: "You wanna be magnificent instantly? Just use this cream". A little later Munchausen guarantees: unbelievable "creamamorphosis", or should we say, a transformational miracle. Ernst Bloch (Das Prinzip Hoffnung) predicted and explained this factory of dreams as an encyclopedic scale.

Sharp criticism of knowledge as the fetish of western civilization was memorably conducted by Adorno and Horkheimer (Dialectic of Enlightenment: 1949). The Frankfurt school taught us how the ideology of enlightenment produces dehumanization and reification of reality: a technological no-topos (literally: no-place) does to us exactly what the name of the epic hero Ulysses (literally: no-body) suggests. We become objects, gadgets, working machines, wheels of thoughtless and emotionless mechanization. This is in fact a perfect example of a realized utopia. In the same line of thinking, Ideology could be defined as the rationalization of a utopian projection - mostly achieved in the form of a Frankenstein-like dystopia. Hence utopias and dystopias usually travel together. And could we even imagine a society without their ambiguous company? Judging by the American example, we haven't come that long a way, baby.

The American debate on political correctness (PC), as a term coined during the late eighties and initially understood as a language strategy, has in the late nineties spread from university departments to all spheres of American public speech. Turning into a dominant US movement, PC actually has its roots in the radicalism of the sixties, and it is the stories of Jefferson Poland and Timothy Leary which are to be remembered for a linguistic evolution of the ideologization of everyday reality. Therefore the phrase which particularly determined PC movement, "every speech is political speech" (Katzwell et Phillips, 1994), perfectly reflects the studies of Michel Foucault, where every discourse is understood as a form of ideological manipulation of the speaker. By the beginning of the nineties, in seminar papers and lectures, as well as in the daily paper, magazines and official TV programs, words like Blacks were changed into Afro-Americans; words like Latinos were dropped, while Hispano-Americans was linguistically inaugurated instead. All public allusions to national, racial, sexual or medical deprivations were "magically", as it by an order, silenced. It looked as if the weak ones have finally triumphed over many different hate-speeches. For the first time in American history, The First Amendment faced profound, although initially indirect criticism. Because PC was protecting people from verbal harassment, from insult-speech and depreciatory-speech, the absolute free-

Old-world and new-world utopias of "equal opportunity" do not in fact tolerate meritocracy, because they do not allow any exception an exceptional treatment

dom of speech hit its unexpected limit. If verbal offense leads to the physical one, then speech, any speech, should be just as restricted legally as violent behavior is (Greenawalt, 1995). Nat Westoff, the prophet of the "untouchable" status of The First Amendment, disagrees furiously, but books like *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech*, and *It's a Good Thing*, too by Stanley Fish sets a whole new demystifying agenda. The climate of legislation of verbal victimology by means of political correctness was completed with a recommendation of what the American government called offensive action: women and minorities were to be employed more often and on better working conditions. Spreading of various writings by minority groups has soon developed into feminist and Marxist studies, advanced training in Homosexual studies, Chicano studies, Afro-American studies, Hispanic-American studies, Native American studies etc. Academic glossiness has borne some really appealing fruits: end of legally undisturbed phallocentric white-male supremacy and sexual discrimination inside the University, opening of new university departments, support of national and social coexistence called "multiculturalism" (we are now introducing improved although similar ideological Marxist-terms, like *stratoculturalism*). Clinton's administration will also be remembered by a significant increase of women in the government, take as an example only Madeleine K. Albright's circle of influence as Hillary Clinton's impact on the health and children issues. The Clintonites are also responsible for political slogans sounding very much like this: *love thy neighbor (non-white) as you love yourself (white)*, while Hillary Clinton's catch-phrase the politics of meaning (Kinball, 1994:67) left a lot of its semantic anti-oppression nuances fuzzy. Probably because of the general fuzziness of the PC concept, its critics get an early start: during the eighties, a student cartoon strip in a Brown University magazine discussed "the sin" of looking in politically incorrect belief that "some people are more beautiful than others". But to Eastern Europeans, this not only sounds funny, but also seems familiar. During the later half of this century, European socialist countries, for instance Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia, paid a lot of attention to the notion of *social justice for all* (again a fuzzy term), but their major problem was - and a very exact one at that - the inability to eliminate the difference: be it professional, physical, age or sexual difference, or simply a disparity of various people's talents. After the socialist era, values of egalitarianism, solidarity and the theoretical "brotherhood of men" remained publicly unchanged. The legal system still proclaims equal conditions (EC) for all Croatian citizens, reminding us that PC has a very resilient parent-term bred on European ground. What occurs now between Croatia and the United States are paradoxical ideological collisions. At Zagreb university, for instance, there are almost priorities and negative solidarity of scholars who were themselves oppressed not so long ago (on nationalistic grounds), just as the American university gives preference to women and minorities who were until recently opposed on non-white-male grounds. The criterion for employment in both cases has nothing to do with anybody's true professional qualifications. Here and there a careful observer could easily find individuals who commit a sin of *talentism* and hence disturb a PC or EC "social order". I do not know about the United States, but in Croatia such "moble-makers" are either sent to exile (which is why more than a half of our graduated scholars work abroad) or forced to change their profession. Old-world and new-world utopias of "equal opportunity" do not in fact tolerate meritocracy, because they do not allow any exception an exceptional treatment. The ideal of communalism, in Croatia or America, is sustainable only at the price of a slavish obedience to the larger and deliberately equalizing group. Hence utopias never produce Mozarts, Cherkovs, Einsteins or Magic Johnsons; utopias, on the contrary, demand

The
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(literature
departments),

shows
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wishful humanistic
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in terms of social
power equates army
force,

accumulation
of wealth or
influence
of religion

sub-
mission to the bureaucracy of equality. That
is why a common utopian mistake seems to be confusion of people's
equal legal rights with their equal opportunities and achievements. And
equal legal rights are necessary, while equal opportunities and achieve-
ments (both biological and intellectual) are, fortunately, impossible.
Unless we are facing the dove age. Probably the only statesman that
has ever managed to come a bit closer to the idea of genuine political
correctness, and I am talking about two millennia,
is Solon (640-560 BC). But he,
contrary to the ideologi-

oil rhetoric of our times, abolished the concept of equal opportunities and proscribed a high threshold of acquirable wealth. Having economically passed that threshold, rich people were obligated to donate money to the state treasury. In other words and expressed in today's mental images, he prevented Microsoft from financially ruling the world, without causing fatal company economic loss or disabling it to further develop computer technology. The next century utopia would, I guess, therefore resemble Solon's government, except for the part dealing with the surplus of money. The future builders of ideal society will probably not invest in the state treasury (mostly used for wars and arms), but in welfare, health and art: just like contemporary tycoons actually do when interested in escaping high taxes. And nobody could say they are not up to utopia.

By now I hope it has become clear that PC is an old and easily manipulated concept. This year's political process initiated by Kenneth Starr, a republican in pursuit of Bill Clinton's *homos*, has also proved that the case of sexual harassment in the workplace could be used not as emancipation agenda, but as a resource of political pressure. Political audience and policy makers were more interested in proving Clinton's faults than protecting the victim's (Monica Lewinsky) rights. The reproaches that the PC movement provoked in the last couple of years are consequently tied to converting a PC utopian theory to a PC dystopian practice: from a speech that supported respect for a difference, to a speech that grants new privileges. Robert Brustein (1994:25) warns against PC's "crypto-Marxist motif", i.e. the endeavor of the ideologists to replace the cultural elite by a populist and egalitarian concept where employment is dependent on the candidate's place on a minority scale, not on the skill scale. Robert Alter (1994:8) is protesting against the PC politics that "have made Toni Morrison more important than Shakespeare", and Doris Lessing (1994:117-118) is equating PC with social realism, claiming that only the ideologists of social realism may demand from an author to write stories "about" something and by all means fight against "social injustices". The result of these tendencies, concludes Lessing, is Soviet literature, full of "black" oppressors and "white" victims. Wilson Kramer (1994:173) is addressing PC as a false protector of the American easy target, thereby a movement that begs for itself a special immunity from any sort of criticism. And where there is no room for criticism, members of the Club Perfect are not far from the mouth of totalitarianism. A separate wave of the PC currents examines the stories backlash. Why? After this powerful decade of global liberalism where some people were nevertheless more equal than the others (to speak Orwellian for a second), because some people sat at Woodstock singing Peace, freedom, Happiness while others

PC is an oversensitive social contract of common courtesy: necessary for regulating superficial, ritualized and public modes of expression, but insufficient in cases of more intensive plus private human communication, be it love or literature

were traumatized by the Vietnam syndrome, America was left schizoidly disturbed but still in love with egalitarianism. The lesson, it appears, is being slowly learned only thirty years after the fact. Dean Carter (1995:145):

Literature, however nondiscriminately advanced, is intrinsic to morality in the simple sense that morality is the elevation of some attitudes, positions, or behavior above others.

The utopias of equality have finally been proven immoral: it is not correct to employ person A as a classical philologist just because this A character has a status of "minority victim", while more professionally competent person B does not have a discriminative record. Political movements that define themselves primarily by opposing some kind of discriminating politics, for instance feminism but also ecology and especially political correctness, after a magnificent defeat of its antagonists have serious troubles with structuring more sophisticated, real binary, peace goals. Peace presupposes heterogeneity and nuances: fertilization and slow growth instead of immediate conquest; learning instead of self-observation and narcissism. Separatism enclaves like Women studies or Homosexual studies may offer to their students a significant increase in self-esteem, but it does not automatically revoke the complexity of human culture whose changes are Dead White Whiten

like Cervantes. Political correctness is almost silly and sadly ephemeral in comparison with the historical and ontological levels of *Don Quixote*, and let us not forget how this particular character became a symbol of awakening from any naive utopia of the obsessive victim-defense ("down with the windmills!"). As for the "multiculturalism", "intraculturalism" and the blurred voices of colonized cultures (postcolonialism): the whole western civilization is marked by deliberate as well as subconscious influence of "marginalized" interlocution - Goethe's famous prologue to *Aurist* is taken from the Indian tradition; more precisely: from Kalidasa's play *Sakuntala* (4th century). Hesse and Mann were strongly influenced by Buddhism. American beat culture reached Soviet Moscow in the works of Akhmatova and Brodskij, English modernism (Pound, Yeats, Craig) was deeply influenced by Japanese art. Shakespeare took plots from Plutarch and Plautus, La Fontaine borrowed motives from Panchetone and Aesop. Eshlin has proven that "low", or rather popular discourses and values (from the carnival code to legal vocabulary) have been living in the language of "high" literature since the ancient times: Gerard Manzi in *The History of the Devil* made us understand how come the devil of Islam, Christianity and Judaism have so many rhetorical resemblances. Just as Athens has culturally ruled over Rome, so the African dance rhythms have since the beginning of the XX century ruled the global dance scene. And there are many more examples. Because the **system of human knowledge** does not consist only of victims and oppressors, as the Marxist as well as PC ideologists would like us to believe, but of numerous interactive cultural units. If one reads foreign authors or learns foreign languages, one is for all interests and purposes intracultural, just as every culture is by definition intraculturally open not only to goods made in its domestic backyard. The trouble with today man culture is its journalistic profile and underreporting of more complex or contradictory messages that newsmakers, having less and less time for interpretation of the events, leave out of their material. The uneducated person therefore has minimal chance of getting information about profound permeation of cultural discourses if (s)he relies only on the electronic media. What often deeper comprehending of social heterogeneity is the institution of reading: what often cultural confidence is instruction in the humanities and the natural sciences. Education still means the ability to confront and compare different cultural phenomena, be it Madonna's songs and troubadour poetry or the films of Oliver Stone and Aeschylus' play *The Persians*. Semiology has taught us that what in fact is a text, a cultural text (Eco: 1978), and not just a political one: otherwise we would bury artists together with their political epoch. It is conceivable that political correctness as a **stipos of neglected**

knowledge shall soon be replenished with a more realistic criterion of cultural competence. Of intellectuals dead and alive. And what kind of university shall see this changed? Free of fees, politically independent, liberal in the sense of including not only type but also a curriculum of great works [measured instinctively all the way since Aristotelian times and by many post-antiquity, international standards], explicitly devoted into research, art, teaching or applied work specialization. In this way "knowledge" as **permanent education** will be gettable through plenty of entrances: not just through the one and only Correct Gate.

One more thing. PC has thought us that linguistic euphemism matter in a field which has something but not everything to do with knowledge: is usually underestimated emotional area. I would like to quote from J.M. Coetzee's book *Giving Offense: Essays on Discourse* (1994:3):

Artistic, academic intellectuals are not notably quick to take offense. Like Karl Popper, they tend to believe that "I must teach myself to distrust that dangerous intuitive feeling or conviction that it is I who am right. I must distrust that feeling however strong it may be. Indeed, the stronger it is, the more I should mistrust it, because the stronger is, the greater the danger that I may deceive myself; and, with it, that I may become intolerant fanatic."

The same Popperian intellectual will be utterly disdainful of any non-rational behavior treating it as a sign of a weak personality or personality that should be patronized or exposed to irony. As the unfrozen former, Coetzee continues (1994: 4), reason is a form of power with no (in-built) sense of what the experience of powerlessness might be. In short: reason is unable to understand emotional injustice, just like emotional injustice is incapable of thinking rationally. That is why Baudrillard's horizon mentally seeds like another utopian utopia - steering the Jew with offenses could for Baudrillardians only be a sign of the masters' irrational submission to the global Wise Lost finger (Baudrillard, 1994: 155-159) or attitude that even people are simulation without any "reality" left. But to the offended Jew the feeling of hurt is extremely real. It would be much more efficient for the PC movement to consider this non-theoretical approach. In my hometown of Zagreb, I have recently witnessed a situation where a fully dressed middle-aged man was dragging and battering a middle-aged woman in slippers and tracksuit, just in front of a crowd waiting for the bus (of which I was also a part). There was no police around. After a while, I started from the grasp toward the molested woman, while a male voice from the crowd shouted at me: *Leave her alone, she must be a whore and the female voice from the same direction added: She must be guilty of something other-*

wise the man wouldn't beat her. At this point the crowd burst into collective laughter. As negative events like that, PC is much more than a linguistic maneuver or "zero-tolerance policies, under which offending employers were disciplined or discharged for relatively trivial offenses" (Kingsley Browne, *The Economist*, July 4th 1998). PC is a civilized manner of protecting the people from verbal (whore?) and thereby physical (she deserves to be beaten?) molestations. The feeling of shame that for a long time fills rape victims or natives that cannot wear is just as much a case of irrational loss of individual or collective dignity. What victims try to regain is emotional stability whereas **more knowledge** about the motives of incident does not diminish the hurt. Personal testimonies of porno actresses are similarly indicative: they rationally understand that a public performance of naked sex-rituals is not a shocking thing anyone but definitely a well-paid job (by the way: in porno movies nowadays the taboos of nudity are replaced by the taboos of violence and brutality), but the interviewed actresses do however suffer a strong emotional feeling of shame, precisely because of their exposed body (MacKinnon, 1987). PC is therefore more relevant as the respect for person's emotionality, as compassion, than as a postcognitive theory of ghettoized difference. Theory, as a rule, reveals a very good and intellectual model, but only "in theory", meaning: away from direct confrontation, people are casually careless when making decisions about other people's deaths or "information". What I want to emphasize is that PC should not take up the status (the period when Playboy was founded) double-standard legacy, for it is exactly the Playboy propaganda which hypocritically pleads only for that level of emancipation which provides magazine centerfolds, while cunningly keeping quiet about the mechanization of consumer's erotic standards or the lack of human body privacy (otherwise characteristic for concentration camps and institutions alike). In this context, PC is an oversimplified social contract of **common courtesy**: necessary for regulating superficial, ritualized and public modes of expression, but insufficient in cases of more intensive plus private human communication, be it love or literature. Rump, but Anthropomorphs knew that. His play *The Arch* (144 BC) could not be more hedonistically and erotically explicit (all sexual preferences included), yet at the same time more critical about "rational utopias". The ancient writer of comedies mocked the **know-all** usurper of the throne, Ptolemaeus, leaving him at the end to rule over nothing but himself: other humans were excluded. And I really enjoy this poetic justice: if you produce a no-place, you are left with no-people to inhabit it. The manseholds of tyrants already attract visitors only in the form of bird's... excrement.

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Catastrophe is a sudden violation of the order of things caused by internal or external factors, a concept that can be applied not only to natural and biological events but also to economic, social, ideological, cultural and artistic ones. Unlike crisis, which does not imply chain reaction because it takes place within one of these spheres, catastrophe has the character of an avalanche for it manifests itself in all spheres; it embraces and penetrates everything; it is inescapable.

In the sphere of intellectual and artistic production, catastrophe has two basic forms. The first is the institutional catastrophe. This is not a crisis involving creative politics or productive planning of institutions or a bringing of their actions to a temporary halt or an organised evacuation but the literal ruin of institutions and total paralysis of their activity. However, catastrophe is not simply the break-down of infrastructure. The essential point is that both intellectual and artistic action, when faced with a disaster, are scandalously inadequate. Not that their proposals have secondary value, they are of no value. In other words, the institutional catastrophe means above all the collapse of institutional culture. No matter how the presence of a healer, shaman, professional mourner or jester amidst those going through a micro-tense be opportune, under such circumstances it is absurd to have a theorist of mass communications, a post-structuralist critic, or a conceptual artist. Thus, in the sphere of intellectual and artistic culture, catastrophe will take another form, that of epistemological catastrophe. Institutional culture, or what the contemporary world commonly calls culture, is scandalously unprepared for catastrophe. It is less prepared than virtually any other sector. Whilst it is true that there are ways of dealing with emergency situations - we have special safety units, fire fighting units, supplies of food and drinking water, air raid shelters, etc. - contemporary cul-

ture has not taken any appropriate precautions. If contemporary culture has developed a strong immunity to crisis situations (ever since the modern period our contemporary culture reckons as its beginning, it has permanently been in a state of crisis). However, never was it prepared for the experience of catastrophe. Anything adequate for calamitous situations is beyond the bounds of institutional culture (even if there be a culture of crisis), which is why culture and art, as parts of complex collective production, cease to exist under the conditions of catastrophe.

However, the end of intellectual or artistic culture does not mean that there are no longer any people interested in supporting it, or rather, in stimulating its existence. They try to show that their sphere of activity still exists in spite of everything and that it still has an exclusive meaning. They start with the fact that the most disturbing the context, the more basic there is for creating high cultural values and models of great art. The exaltation of the norm is the most effective counter-position to abnormality. However, grounds exist for supposing that these people are not so much motivated by a sincere belief in their own arguments as by the hope of salvation. Their arguments are in fact addressed to the rescue missions of the "Great Land", the territories that have not been afflicted by the catastrophe. The culture of simulation of culture is a special type of culture. Existing when catastrophe conditions prevail, this culture does not wish to talk about such an issue, and even if it does, it does not use the language of catastrophe to do so. If the main aim is salvation and obtaining priority status in evacuation, to emphasise one's own values as a manifestation of institutional culture cannot help. As the rescuers are the representatives of the "Great Land", the world of institutional values, they will save that which is valuable to themselves and not to those who have experienced the calamity. Thus, during the rescue, those who

obtain privileged status are those who need it least. In other words, the culture that stimulates culture is the culture of survival.

But the end of culture and art does not mean that there are no more thinking people and that creative culture has ceased to exist. However, to preserve intellectual and artistic culture, they have to accept the end of culture and art. They must recognise that a strategy of survival is impossible because what is doomed or is buried under the ruins cannot survive. For then, it is obvious that emphasising the norms in a situation of abnormality is not so much a strategy of opposition as a strategy of action: if works of high standard are created in times of catastrophe, the catastrophe cannot be so catastrophic after all. It is obvious that under catastrophic conditions we must not so much create a simulation of the institutional culture as the culture of catastrophe. All the more reason why, if cultural activity in catastrophic conditions acquires institutional forms, the efforts of the culture of catastrophe must be aimed at the destruction of the institutions.

The culture and art of catastrophe take the fact that they must not so much speak of catastrophe (even institutional culture likes speaking of it) as speak catastrophe as their starting point. It is possible to speak catastrophe in two ways: the first supposes that if the only possible language today is the institutional language and that we have been given no other (that, in fact, everything that goes beyond its boundaries is no longer culture), and if this language refers to itself, is conventional and without vital content, it is not appropriate speaking catastrophe and therefore we must refuse to speak. This self-referentiality of the language of culture must be taken to extremes, to deep subjectivity. If the communicability of institutional culture is the simulation of communication, it is necessary to completely refuse to communicate programmatically.

CATASTROPHE

ically, it is important to show the impossibility of speaking: speaking catastrophe is speaking the impossibility of speaking.

The second way of speaking catastrophe supposes that if it is not possible to speak catastrophe one must not interiorise it, but manifest it and provoke it. If the first way involves extreme subjectivation and solipsism, the second assumes being extremely extroverted; if the first way is so deeply immersed in institutional culture that it no longer needs to obey its laws, the second, by contrast, takes place outside its boundaries. Being beyond the limits of institutional culture means being inside reality, and if reality is catastrophic, it means it is necessary to be inside catastrophe, and if the task is to show oneself inside the catastrophe, it is necessary to be more catastrophic than the catastrophe.

The rejection of the ethical dimension is programmed in the culture of catastrophe; only institutional catastrophe can assume that those who suffer a disaster need to have their own voices celebrated: only institutionalised religion can suppose that the victims of catastrophe need companions. The culture of catastrophe is a product of catastrophe, as is obvious: those who survive the catastrophe think of one thing only: salvation. Their own salvation, not that of their neighbors. Dialogue, contact, communication and decency: these are all values of institutional culture, they are out of place when the conditions of catastrophe hold sway. People who propagate the culture of catastrophe are not motivated by routine professional or ethical duty but by passion for their own work. Therefore, in the full synchronicity of the two ways of suppressing the culture of catastrophe, there are also two ways of understanding its ethics: ethics is reduced to or consists only of the awareness of the impossibility of ethical action, an ecstatic love for the whole humanity.

It is precisely because the culture of catastrophe does not conduct a dialogue that it cannot enter into a dialogue with the institutional culture. Just as there can be no dialogue between the norm and abnormality. When rescue teams export models of this culture to the "Great Land", they are completely useless: even in an ethnographic museum they look out of place. The first version of the culture of catastrophe is frustrated by its own forced rejection of the world and perceives the world of institutions as the only reality where it is possible to use the word as an absolutely ideal reality, a mythological perfection. Once it has reached the "Great Land" it can talk of one thing only: its own exalted admiration of institutional culture. The world of institutions does not need exaltation (flattering), because exaltation is a deviation from the norm, it is politically incorrect. Institutional culture is ready and willing to accept criticism from the victims of catastrophe rather than adoration - a critique of inefficiency and partiality of those who administer help to the victims of catastrophe (or a criticism of the institutions and not questioning of the legitimacy of their existence as such). The second version of the culture is still more inadequate and improper because it is able only to reproduce catastrophe as secularities that have not yet been affected by it. It does not criticise the institutions but totally denies them right to exist. The response is that this does not seem to be alienation or incomprehension but repression. And repression convinces the culture of catastrophe that its programmed catastrophism is justified.

However, the suspicion arises that the repugnance and repression of institutional culture in its dealings with the culture of catastrophe is not without a certain guilt. If the *modus vivendi* of the institutional culture is routine, pure reproduction, catastrophe is the only justification for its existence. The values of dialogue,

communication, contact, etc., are so emptied out of all meanings that they can continue to be values only if there is someone who cannot or will not embrace these values. There is also another suspicion: that the culture of catastrophe, which does not want to be defined as culture but which remains a culture, unconsciously realises that it is a cultural phenomenon: only insofar as it takes account of institutional culture, of which it is a negation. It realises that the incapacity or lack of desire for dialogue is nevertheless a form of dialogue. In other words, norm and abnormality only make sense when one is aware of the other.

This enables one to draw the most widely differing and contradictory conclusions: since the boundary between the norm and what is not the norm is a convention, the norm is catastrophic whilst the catastrophic is the norm. Thus, catastrophe is a part of institutional culture in the same way like the culture which proclaims itself part of institutional culture in a programmed manner. The culture of catastrophe is only an image reflected in mirror that does not want to recognise itself as such. It is difficult to break out of this vicious circle: the first step may be for institutional culture to recognise its own catastrophic nurturing while the culture of catastrophe recognises its own normality. And finally, the last and most intransigent conclusion: that the contemporary world is global in the sense that a catastrophe that occurs anywhere seems to be a clear violation of the natural order of things, so that the event begins to affect everyone - even those far removed from its epicentre - and restoring order thus also becomes a universal cause. The new order must therefore be really new: neither the one that existed before the catastrophe nor the order emerging triumphantly from its ruins.

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THE BUDDHA IS NOT SMILING


Rustom Bharucha

Invoking the name of the Buddha to witness the success of nuclear tests is more than a perversion of language: it is a desecration of whatever the Buddha represents in spirit and being. The message of his dhamma has obviously been lost on our nuclear hawk, who first invented the code - "The Buddha has smiled" - to confirm the nuclear blast in Pokhran in 1994. Today, in the increasingly communalised political culture of India, we are getting used to such perversions of the sacred.

In the name of Rama, a mosque has been demolished, precipitating the worst communal violence since the Partition. Not only will a Rama Mandir be built on this demolished site, as the votaries of Hindutva repeatedly insist, this temple will also be the apotheosis of a *Rashtra Mandir*. First, you deify in the name of god, and then you equate this god with the State: there could not be a more insidious betrayal of what this god incarnates in the first place.

Today, it is not gods that matter to politicians - they are mere pawns to be communal agendas - but the "sacrosanct" foundations of the State that justify the most blatant violations of justice and truth. As the stability of the State is placed above the instabilities of a democratic decision-making process, the absolutist "hard lines" of authoritarianism prevail over the possible consensus of dialogue. In this congealing of dogmas, the most arbitrary national decisions can be justified in the name of *Swayaj* - yet another perversion of our times.

Swayaj - Gandhi's radical concept of "self-rule" - extended beyond political and economic considerations to include the moral dimensions of any true state of independence. "Moral", as Gandhi emphasised, "means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of *Ramrajya* excludes the replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free."



First, you destroy in the name of god, and then you equate this god with the State: there could not be a more insidious betrayal of what this god incarnates in the first place

Are we mostly free in India today? With the nuclear blasts in Pokhran, we have entered another state of violence that mostly extends - I will not say transcends - the militarism of our defence forces. Gandhi has no patience whatsoever with the doubletalk of military strategists who assumed that the atom bomb could initiate a new era of ahimsa. In a sharp rejoinder to General Cariappa's dismissal of non-violence as an adequate response to the terrors of the world, the Father of the Nation reaffirmed his commitment to peace: "[I]n this age of the Atom Bomb, unadorned non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together by violence." If the devastation in Hiroshima had reached Gandhi, it also alerted him to the "suicide" of entire mankind in its failure to recognise the positive effects of non-violence.

It could be argued, however, that Gandhi is too remote from the realities of our world today. Even in his own lifetime, he was often dismissed as an impossible idealist. Besides, he

has been killed so many times through any number of appropriations and betrayals, following his assassination by an RSS indoctrinated Hindu fanatic - isn't it time that we allowed his soul to rest? And yet, Gandhi will not allow millions of people in this world to rest, because he epitomised what an anti-nuclear activist has described as "resting in action". Gandhi reminds us of the drops of water in an ocean which are at rest, even as the ocean is restless.

In his own quest for stillness, Gandhi was not afraid to acknowledge that we may not realise Swraj in our own lifetimes. Countering the bombast of national self-sufficiency upheld by politicians today, this is a profoundly humble admission by one of the greatest experimenters of the "self" that the world of politics has ever known. In positing "soul-force" against "brute-force" in his unflinching satyagraha tract *Ardh Swraj* - perhaps more sedition today within the monolithic categories of Hindutva - Gandhi was realistic enough to acknowledge that, "India is not ripe for it [swraj]".

However, since the utopian element in Gandhi's imagination could never be entirely repressed, we are also reminded that, "If India adopted the doctrine of love as an active part of her religion and introduced it in her politics, Swraj would descend upon India from heaven." But - the realist intervenes - "I am painfully aware that that event is far off as yet."

Certainly, the blasts in Pokhran have delayed the materialisation of that event even further. Opting for the nuclear deterrent in the name of protecting "national security", the dominant political order in India has simply endorsed whatever in the name of humanity is associated with death and destruction. With increasing belligerence, our politicians on the right are clamouring to join the nuclear club. This is as grotesque as it is pathetic. The big boys are not likely to accommodate a Third World country, which is not "the most favoured nation" in the world. Instead of lamenting the dubious ethics of this restricted membership

monopolised by a nuclear Mafia, shouldn't we be asking ourselves: Do we need to join this club in the first place? If we can't beat them, do we have to join them? Can we find another strategy of exposing the hypocrisy of pseudo-pacifist war-mongers, who refuse to cut down on their own nuclear warheads, even though these could be used to blow up the world several times over? Do we have to accept this assimilation of reason for our own "security"? Can we seek another path?

What would that path be? I am drawn to the Middle Path, not necessarily evincing the Buddhist principles - I am not a follower of any particular discipline or creed, and I am also sceptical that principles from spiritual traditions can be automatically transferred to material and secular contexts. I accept in this regard the vulnerability and imperfection of our mediations as human beings. Keeping this in mind, I would acknowledge that a possible "middle path" would not be one of compromise, equivocation, subterfuge (all justified in the name of expediency). Rather, it is the path of cutting through a thicket of seeming solutions, which are actually dissolutions of any sustainable life-choices. This path would also spurn the illusions of "instant success" - a nuclear blast lasts for a few seconds, but its effects can linger forever. Defying its computerised efficiency, this path would need to acknowledge the lessons derived from obstacles and the gains of negotiating a dialogue with our intimate enemies, whose predicament we share.

The "middle path" may be too impractical for the advocates of Political Realism in India today. But how real is their "realism"? Surely the realities that our government has audaciously called attention to in the countdown to the nuclear tests - escalating border tensions, disclosures of enemy secrets, even the discovery of a helipad in the far corners of Arunachal Pradesh - have not been free from the trappings of fabrication. Our politicians have constructed - and magnified - "the enemy" with all the mesala that one has come to associate with the nationalist blockbusters of Bollywood. Is "an" insulating reality these days, or is it the other way around?

Besides, more than evidence of "the enemy" is needed in order to translate the imminence of threat into the activation of nuclear power. Countering this logic, a most emphatic causality is being endorsed by the government: "threat to national security" must result in "nuclear action". All other options of negotiation are closed. Can we honestly say, however, that we are more "secure" today as citizens of India in a nuclear state, whether or not this category is officially recognised? Is "national

security" above all other considerations? Is it a transcendent category made in the name of protecting the citizens' interests, even if they have been totally left out of the cognitive and ethical process that should go into the making of such a critical decision?

Secrecy is the carte-blanche of the State in such masterminded predicaments. To be more precise, it is the trump-card of a small coterie of politicians - in this case, yet another "club" with RSS affiliations and loyalties - which purports to represent "the State", even when the members of its own government are not taken into account. Never has the State in India been more separated from the protocol of governance. But these are Top Secrets, remember: if they are concealed, it is for the "good" of the nation. Thus, silenced into recognizing our own naivety as thinking, responsible citizens, we have no other choice but to accept the most lamentable lack of accountability, transparency, absence of public dialogue - indeed, downright clandestine conspiracy against any possibility of democratic dissent or the articulation of an alternative line of action. Before one had the opportunity to respond to a "nuclear option", the deed was already done on our behalf. The mantra of "national security" had already sanctified the blast.

It would seem to me that we have arrived at a certain point in Indian politics when it becomes imperative to disavow the "national" from a particular brand of "nationalism" that has, in effect, justified the necessity of nuclear power. No Indian thinker has been more soothless in his almost visceral reaction to the "anaesthetics" of nationalism than Rabindranath Tagore. At the core of his holism was his deep awareness of the soul-decaying mechanism of nationalism. Must "machine be pitted against machine, and nation against nation, in an endless bad-fight of politics?" let us listen to how the Poet initiated a dialogue around this rhetorical question.

"You say, these machines will come into an agreement, for their mutual protection, based upon a conspiracy of fear. But will this federation of steam-boilers supply you with a soul, a soul which has her conscience and her God?" Calling attention to the humble and meek who do not join this "federation", and whose "only crime [is] that they have not been organised", Tagore plays the Devil's Advocate: "That does not matter, the devil must go to the wall - they shall die and this is science." To which he counters by saying: "No, they shall live", because our world is a "moral world" and the "moral nature of man cannot be divided into convenient compartments for its posterity."

The greatest critic of nationalism in India was also its most ardent patriot. Indeed, he is the author of our national anthem. It is sometimes forgotten that with all his fervour, this Great Sentinel (as Gandhi revered Tagore even in his deepest disagreements with him) was extremely vigilant about how nationalist rhetoric needed to be modulated in order to respect the diversities of culture in the Indian society. Thus, we find Tagore composing only the first verse of *Bandha Mohan*, which has now become the signature tune for the documentation of the nuclear blast in A. R. Rahman's pop-video version of the hymn to *Shivacharya*. The second verse celebrating the militant manifestations of the goddess Durga was too loaded with the rhetoric of Hindu religiosity to satisfy the "monotheistic" ideals of the Poet; he also realised that this religiosity could, in his words, "wound Muslim susceptibilities".

Are we going to accuse the Poet now for pandering to "minority appeasement"? I think we would be better advised to rethink the creative secular task that goes into respecting differences in a pluralist society. From Tagore's troubled relationship with the idea of nationalism, we are challenged, I believe, into re-defining how national considerations can be democratised without being subsumed within the prescribed dictates of nationalism. If we allow the BJP to monopolise the authentic reading of Hindu nationalism, we are silencing other possibilities of what the national could mean in non-sectarian contexts. Instead of challenging their moral right to speak for the nation, however, we are allowing the top brass of the Hindu Right to make decisions of such a critical nature that to oppose them (perhaps when it is too late) can only open us to the charge of anti-nationalism. We should not allow this to happen. We should not succumb to the "conspiracy of fear" which the Hindu Right is both manufacturing and capitalising on, with very strident warnings against our enemy across the border, which has only precipitated the retaliatory action of six nuclear tests by Pakistan. The BJP now believes that its initiative has been "vindicated".

A public debate needs to be opened on the priorities of such legitimised xenophobia. Is "national security" the fundamental anxiety for millions of people in this country, or is it the availability of water, food, housing, health care, and primary education, which continues to be denied to an overwhelming number of our fellow-citizens? Some of the latest news in Pakistan was about dancing as a celebration, basking in the glory that their village has now become "world famous". Indeed, Pokhran has already assumed the aura of a pilgrimage spot, with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad declaring that a Shakti Peeth will be built there in honour of

the bomb. However, not everyone is smiling in Pokhran. For the women, the daily grind of life continues - hours of walking in the wilderness and grafting heat to collect a meagre supply of water. In this ruthless indifference of the State to the most fundamental human needs, what future can there be for Pokhran's children?

Indeed, what future can there be for our earth if it is to become a lethal laboratory for the relentless testing (and deterrence) of violence? When the erstwhile government of France had the temerity to test its nuclear resources in an island in the Pacific Ocean - perhaps the most tranquil abode of peace in our polluted world - the horror of ecocide was unmistakable. Pokhran may not be the Pacific, but it is a place in its own right. And in the eyes of Mother Earth, it is equally worthy of love.

The decision-makers behind the blasts in Pokhran have contributed their mite to the ecocide - let us not evade this point in the growing anxieties over more material matters like the effects of sanctions and the future of our international trade. Of course, the economic implications of the sanctions are critical, particularly for the poorer sections of society, who are the least recognised and the hardest hit in any financial crisis. In more pragmatic terms, the business community could justifiably ask: Are the blasts ultimately worth the sanctions in terms of our aghast image as a "rogue state" and the very real cutbacks in foreign aid, which India can ill afford at this point in time, despite all the rhetoric of *swadeshi*? However, there is an even harder question to ask, which inevitably reaffirms the moral dimensions of the crisis: Even if the sanctions do not prove to be as devastating as some governments would like them to be, does that minimize the violence of the nuclear tests? Does it justify their existence? In other words, can we afford to stop weeping and learn to love the bomb?

My response to Dr. Strangelove and his Indian clones is very clear: You do not love the bomb under any circumstances. Sanctions or no sanctions, the blasts in Pokhran cannot be justified. None could enhance the moral argument with an espouse by an international community of peace activists. Not only is deterrence based on what the Realists distinguishately acknowledge as a "necessary evil" - the prevention of war through the threat of retaliation - it has to be "credible", as Achin Vanaik emphasises, in order to be "effective". This means that "the capability and the will of the deterrer must not be doubted", resulting in periodic displays of this "capability" (in the Republic Bay President, for example), apart from the constant update of its technologies.

If the preservation of a culture doesn't not collide with the preferences and long term interests of its members (including the need for creative innovation), nor with the interest of the other members of their civic (territorial) community, it is better—*ceteris paribus*—to preserve it than not to



Deterrence cannot afford to get stuck in a time-lag: it has to be persistently competitive.

At an epistemological level, Vanaik exposes the irrationality of such nuclear logic: "To deter is not the same thing as deterrence which is a conceptualisation, a theorisation of what nuclear weapons are supposed to be capable of achieving. Nuclear weapons do not create deterrence. It was deterrence that was created to cope with, to rationalize the existence of nuclear weapons." Instead of exposing the violent hypocrisy of this reversed causality - the post-Hiroshima legacy of Cold War militaries - our government has simply reaffirmed the causality by testing its nuclear power in order to affirm its faith in deterrence as a military strategy. Finally, it is not the "government" as such that ultimately controls the nuclear buttons, but a few decision-makers who make the "right" choices for the entire nation.

Can one trust any of the decision-makers who were responsible for giving the green signal for the blasts in Pokhran? Can one believe in their derivative discourse of deterrence? Or does one simply accept that if deterrence does not remove violence, it manages at least to postpone its eruption. In this indefinite postponement - and here I bring the argument back

from the *Aspelotik* to the moral and spiritual dimensions of the problem - what are we doing to our selves? Apart from politicians, scientists are not likely to address such questions either, because they tend to be almost furmably ignorant of the sources of the self. In fact, one wonders if the "self" as a critical category exists at all in the tunnel-vision of their vocabularies.

One is not demystifying science here, which has become only too predictable - and counter-productive - in the growing number of communitarian and anti-secularist attacks on modernity, reason, and westernisation. Science is integral for the growth of any nation, and it is not necessarily inimical to the maintenance of the self. But what science are we talking about? Is there is it being addressed? To satisfy which needs? Whose needs? Now that one of the masterminds behind the nuclear tests can afford to say that he has "achieved his life's ambition" - such hubris can only be pitied - would he be prepared to extend his expertise to "civilian needs", for example, the distribution of water and fuel to millions of people in the country? This is not a misplaced demand on my part, but a plea for getting our priorities right.

If there is a lesson to be learned from Gandhi here, it is the need to respect the economy of human endeavour, so that we do not gain - or destroy - at anyone else's expense, and we do not squander these natural, cultural, and spiritual resources which are necessary for our own sustenance and of the world around us. Of what use is it to build a dam when the natural habitat is destroyed along with the lives (and livelihoods) of the people who live by the river? What purpose can there be in fastening the wealth of the nation at the expense of grinding the wretched of the earth into dust? What is the point of gaining the world at the expense of losing your soul? In these homiletic questions lie some of the deepest foundations of the ecology of the self, without which no social or political transformation can be sustained or sustained.

In the nuclear blasts, we have destroyed more than our self-respect in the eyes of the world, or for that matter, in your own eyes as well. We have squandered our possibilities of *ajneya* as a nation by rejecting the ecological bases that have nourished our diverse cultures at human and spiritual levels. The Buddha could not be smiling. Let us remove that perverse wish-fulfilment from our minds, and concentrate instead on the grief of our ruling politicians, wallowing in a pseudo-mythological celebration of their assumed omnipotence and imminent self-destruction.

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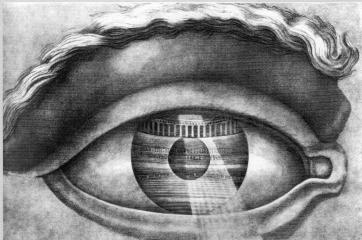
Map of Gazes

Eyes wide open, mouth agape, with spread wings, the cross-eyed angel simultaneously observes the past and the future, but sees "a single catastrophe"

Mira Otašević Ledoux and Man Ray

Claude Nicolas Ledoux's painting *The Symbolic Presentation of the Theatre through the Pupil of an Eye* (Theatre in Besançon, 1804) paints, by means of a searching individuality, to a change in the strategy of the gaze in the theatre. Ledoux executes the new principles in the structure of the audience (the gallery vertical abolished: orchestra seats fixed onto the slightly tilted floor) literally; on the symbolic level, he heralds the space-time complex by means of the fantastic perspective of an individual eye. The image of the Besançon theatre binds the illusion of space and the hallucination of time into a complete emblematic gaze through an isolated fragment of anatomy. Man Ray's *Object of Destruction* (1924), a metronome with an individual eye pinned to it, is already a step toward the disintegration of Ledoux's idealized complex, the beginning of destruction

of space through time. It is an image of an unstable coexistence of all things under the superordinate ration of space and time. The world is indeed rickety, shabby, weak. The fascinated eye experiences the destruction of space through time while time keeps the best regarders of the point of view of the gazing eye. Man Ray must have loved the story, perfectly theatrical, of captain Wilhelm von Sanderfeld, who after the sack of Rome in 1527 put on the papal gown, the soldier clad as cardinal kissing his feet as he blessed them with wine. However distorted, Ledoux's panorama became the image of paradise lost. The permanently vacillating subjective gaze of Man Ray's metronome abolished the utopian image of One and Whole. Therefore, the piecemeal nature and the structures of pictorial fragmentation had to be taken into account, which stipulated the experience of catastrophe and scepticism before the traditional teachings on



Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: The Symbolic Presentation of the Theatre through the Pupil of an Eye (Theatre in Besençon, 1804)

salvation. Having given birth to a *Secule Phoenix*, the world hoped for the *Angelus Novus*. "Klee has a painting called *Angelus Novus*," Walter Benjamin was to proclaim in his historiophilosophical theses.

The Angel's Gaze*

But Klee & Benjamin's *Angelus Novus* (1933), bearing the memory layers of disfiguration, brutality, pain, intended to go away from something it was fascinated by, while "he would like to stop, wake the dead and mend what is broken." Eyes wide open, mouth agape, with spread wings, the cross-eyed angel simultaneously observes the past and the future, but sees "a single catastrophe." Its auto-condensing gaze, however, is not malevolence, but rather

the anxiety of an insight into the overall failure. Thus Benjamin's angel is all made of gestures, and gesture always points to signs. Above the ruins rising to the sky, the new angel is lovely and brutal, innocent and sinful. It revivified volition and abandoned itself to the tempest from paradise on a journey to its own self in the direction Sloterdijk designates as the will-to-leave-onself. Too clearly does it hear the "voice of life hurt" to recognize progress in the heavenly tempest. For indeed it is but a Benjaminian coup de grace (in the closing inserted, insulated, contradictory sentence).

While the gaze of the *Angelus Novus* is formed by the image of the immediate tragic stage, the eyes of Helmut Müller's *Grievous Angel* (1958) have been squashed by the future, "eyeballs burst like stars." Denouncing painfully what is yet to come, "expecting history in the petrification of flight gaze breath,"

this angel-demon finds peace only in the moment that closes over it. But this paralytic quality is but a stance of asymbolic death. The thrill sound of rock avalanche before, above and behind the pedestal & rest upon the hapless angel to fly on. Müller's image is inexorable indeed:

*O Lord, swing my neck as I fall
off some
celestial bench*

Benjamin asserted that the amazement at the things we experience in the twentieth century is not philosophical. His *Angelus Novus* is therefore fascinated not amazed. Having endowed him with a *reversus*, Benjamin gave him the insight into absolute past, let him bear witness to the future - and finished. Müller, on the other hand, founded *History on Present* - angels populate his dramaturgy profusely. However *amazing*, they have but a single register of attributes:

* In Jürgen Czekel's new "Balkan Baroque," *New Moment* no.2, special issue to Biennale di Venezia.

- 1 the angel of despair (Orlov)
- 2 the black angel (Orlov)
- 3 the evil angel (I'd Rather be Evil)
- 4 the angel of vengeance (Hamletmachine)
- 5 the angel whose face is at the back of its head (Hamletmachine)

On the "blood-sweat-shit" stage Müller sketches surrealist phantasmagoria, shocking images of destruction and self-destruction worthy of the fabulous Castel Sant' Angelo.

The Angelic Fort

In a 17th century etching, Roman Angelic Fort, in a reflection of the then favorite macabre pyrotechnics, seems uncanny. Once Hadrian's mausoleum, in the hands of popes (who were its masters from 1389 to 1870) it was turned into fort, gaol, dungeon, scaffold. Heretics, political prisoners, philosophers, poets, courtiers, cardinals, bishops, princes and courtiers are hanged, strangled, drowned or buried alive here in a place fight for a new spiritual and political progress, in a fight that after a sea of blood has been shed ends in a synthesis. At the same time, however, the Angelic Fort is a fortress of mighty art, the art of analytical falling apart of all images into fragments - the spiritual shade of Lust/Schmerz, also Helmut Müller. Over that shade the angel of despair circles, with the unequivocal message: "I am the angel of despair. I hand out torture, intimidation, oblivion, joy and pain of the corporeal. My speech is silence, my song a scream..." And indeed, love, that "addiction for small dough," is Müller's chant of Maldoor against God, against society, against life itself: LET'S BELIEVE IN EARTH AND BLOWE HER AT THE MOON. But, just like the scenes from the papal chambers, this is grotesque. The hypnotic laughter and severe stare of girls with no legs, phantasmagoria harpies, the amorphous figure of a woman with two pairs of breasts, flares akin to polyps, all this delight in the crumbling of the world on the walls of the Angelic Fort, just like in the arsenal of Müller's dramaturgy, acquires a grotesque meaning, symbolizes the artificial, the intentional, the singled-out - the game.

Describing the Hall of Thousand Days of the Roman Cancelleria, G.R. Hocke speaks of an ornament in the shape of an individual eye from which like a tear runs a goat's head, whereas hangs a freak of some kind with a head of a grown man - a self-portrait of the artist. In the Hamletmachine, "talking wildly," Ophelia's eye is a watch: Hamlet is Richard III. Macbeth's a Rasolnikov who wants to become a woman (Ophelia draws him a mask of a strumpet with a lipstick), while the main protagonist



Paul Klee: Angelus Novus

The appearance of the angel whose face is at the back of its head that precedes the line "whom you've murdered, him you must also love," is no indication of some possible angel of redemption whose gaze is spiritually Christian, but an exercise in accomplishing the mission: war is over, let's kiss the dead!

of the "shallow death" is a photograph of the Author. The appearance of the angel whose face is at the back of its head that precedes the line "whom you've murdered, him you must also love," is no indication of some possible angel of redemption whose gaze is spiritually Christian, but an exercise in accomplishing the mission: war is over, let's kiss the dead! While the angel of despair circles over the fort, the angel whose face is at the back of its head arranges for Horatio and Hamlet to dance in the middle of the Cancelleria. In a brilliant homage to Chaplin, Müller speaks of being irritated by the Dickensian utopia, of barrenness and his wish, contrary to his conscience, to be delirious. The fact that history is losing its reality, that events occur after their own images, that there is no possibility of self-isolation, could not have escaped his masochistic satisfaction with the truth of the World. Therefore, in the Hamletmachine the prop-masters bring in three tv sets, and the actor in the role of

Hamlet fails to notice. Those programmes with a sound rule the stage. The actor playing Hamlet becomes his own prisoner, wraps his own neck, puts his own data in the computer... The Angel is absent.

Carola Neher Washing her Face

"I can no longer think what I want to think. The moving pictures have taken the place of my thoughts," Georges Duhamel wrote in the nineteen thirties. At the same time, Benjamin thinks film a process that has no point in space over against itself wherefrom anything the film does not want could enter the spectator's field of vision. To the loss of the aura, film responds by the artificial construction of personality and events. The gaze becomes the screen half a century before Jean Baudrillard was to write about it! The moving of sequences of meaning in the consciousness, the fabled hyperreality that makes the real hallucinatorily resemble itself, is already there in Benjamin's fantastic premonitions. Under the distasteful guise of the vividly alive, the screen gaze connects directly with "the crisis of death," becomes a new anthropology. The story of Carola Neher, that Benjamin notes in *Synecdoche* conversations, is a nostalgic retrospect of the anthropographic challenge net takes: "Carola Neher was not only learning how to act," testifies Brecht, "it was from me, for example, that she learned how to wash her face. She would only splash her face so it was no longer dirty. I taught her how to wash her face. She eventually brought this skill to such perfection that I wanted to film her doing it." Brecht's intuition of the meaning of the screen version of Carola Neher washing her face could certainly not foresee the virtual triumph over the real. Still, it cannot be denied that this imitation testifies to the fact of the annihilation, essence of time through virtual soda. And Kingdom. Man Ray's metemorphosis is smashed!

What Brecht could not know, Helmut Müller knows. He, therefore, addresses the screen gaze in a grotesque pasty poster: "Television every day repulsion Repulsion..." Our daily murder give us today! Wandering (late) how COMFORT is spelled, Müller takes up arms against the energy of the illusion of reality, trying, finally, his own knot of a disappointed utopian who cannot do without utopia. But, T.S. Eliot would say:

POETRY DOESN'T MATTER!

Translated from the Serbian by Tomislav Brlek

¹¹ Carola Neher (1908 - ?), German actress. Emigrated to the USSR, where she performed in the Satebrik group.

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Dubravka Oraić Tolić



Photo: Pavo Urban

All societal utopias until our century were lucky in that they remained only a dream on the level of paradigmatics and sintagmatics, and that they did not lived its pragmatics



UTOPIA BETWEEN FINITUDE AND INFINITY

The last ten years of our century are marked by an overflow of various 'ends.' In the Rlo library in Zurich, equipped with an ultimate information system, one could encounter difficulties finding a list of titles which include the word 'end.' A kind employee will shrug his shoulders and tell you that this magic eschatological word appears in over two thousand entries on his computer. If you search for the key word 'utopia,' which overlaps with the word 'happiness' on the library shelves, your happiness will be unspokeable. All of literature agrees on the experience which is at the same time your personal experience: the age of utopia ended with the fall of the Berlin wall. With the 'end of history,' 'end of the industrial society,' 'end of art,' 'end of subject' and all other 'ends' - at the end of our century, we are unanimous in the feeling of 'the end of utopia'. It seems that only the interpretations of this end differ. Here is where I find the justification for my contribution to the 'end of utopia' debate.

Long before the fall of the Wall, when I was myself surrounded by walls of Tito's Yugoslavia, I was tormented by the phenomenon of utopia. I belong the generation of '68 in an unusual way: I studied philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb. My professors belonged to the so called 'praxis school' which was

connected to the Frankfurt philosophical headquarters, as that a leftist philosophical thinking, whether I like it today or not, was planted in me. My favorite philosopher was Ernst Bloch. At the same time, I was completely aware of the national question that was shaking the Croatian culture at the time, as a part of the small 'Croatian spring,' analogous to the much more significant and more famous 'the Prague spring.' And this is where my utopian orientation broke at a stick in the water. The 'leftist,' secessionists, utopian education twisted into a 'rightist,' and the stick never stuck to the pure 'left' or the pure 'right.' It stayed broken - not uniformly reflected in the waters of history. When the history, as I knew it, happily ended under the ruins of the Wall, and when it then precipitated in the Balkan war gap, I searched through all of my feelings and my thoughts about the best of all possible worlds. The conclusion I had reached was more or less the following. Utopia truly reached its end, but this was not the end of every step, nor the end of utopian thinking. It was the end of a specific ideological utopia that our century longed for and into which it finally crumbled. Utopia was not invented by Plato in the ideal Republic, neither by Marx in the image of the happy society on the island of Utopia, nor by Campanella in the City of the Sun, or Marx in the project of the classless society. Utopia is equally the biblical 'heaven on earth' and the country of Canaan where honey and milk flow, and the myth of Cockaigne, and the dream about the absolute love, and the wish to own a pair of jeans behind the Iron Curtain, and the tourist dream of today's global society about the vacation on distant islands among wild tribes. All these are only individual utopian projects of one and unique utopian thinking and way of expressing. Every mode of thinking and expressing, put in semiotic-linguistical terms, has its 'paradigmatic' (its system, its language), its 'syntagmatic' (its structure, parole) and its 'pragmatic' (its actualization, realization in life). In ontological thinking and modes of expressing the fundamental paradigm is the unity between the subject and the object, the soul and the world, the man and the nature, its syntagmatic is the profound unity of these opposites, its pragmatic is the absolute harmony, life in accordance with the laws of this unity. Such thinking is a characteristic of a child's mind, mythical and pre-civilization states, non-European cultures, poetry as a genre in literature, realism as a period in literature, Plato's world of ideas and Hegel's maxim: 'The real is the rational, and the rational is the real.' In epistemological ways of thinking and expressing, the basic paradigm is the rupture between the subject and the object, its syntagmatic is the palatal structure of this rupture, and its pragmatic is the life with this rupture. This



thinking is a characteristic of the adult's mind and 'common sense' of the western technological civilization, fiction as a genre in literature, romanticism as a period in literature, Schiller's 'beautiful soul' and Kant's philosophy of the possible experience which cannot reach the *Ding an sich*. Hegel criticized this thinking as the 'unhappy consciousness.' The ontological and the epistemological ways of thinking are in sharp opposition, but at the same time, each in its own way, equally consequent to each other. Things are completely different in the utopian thinking and expressing. This is the ontological thinking in *re*, the correction of the epistemological capture which expects its ideal pragmatics in the future. It is the characteristic of the sub-conscious and dreams, ages of crisis and turning points, projects of absolute happiness. Bloch's philosophy of 'the not-yet' and the culture of the twentieth century as a whole. And precisely because it shifts into the future its absolute unity with the world, its most serious threat is the future present. It is like Janus with two faces: on the one side a strong paradigmatic and syntagmatic, the projection and expectation of absolute harmony and fulfillment, on the other side, a rigid pragmatics which rarely or never brings the longed Absolute. All societal utopias until our century were lucky in that they remained only a dream on the level of paradigmatic and syntagmatic, and that they did not breed its pragmatics. In the system of Plato's Republic there was no room for Homer, because poets, supposedly, 'lie too much.' If a philosopher, were it Plato himself, tried to realize his/her dream, he would become, according to the law of realization of utopia, a dictator like Stalin, who persecuted and killed the poet Gusep Mandelstam, because he had written an ode to him that Stalin did not like, which means that he 'lied.' The misfortune of our century was that it was the first in western history to attempt to realize the societal utopia as a whole, in all of its three dimensions, from the paradigmatic (Marx's ideology) through syntagmatics (revolutions and wars) to pragmatics (the realized utopia on the level of the totalitarian state and terror). A realized utopia is in its final form always a dictatorship, a terror over those beings and phenomena which for some reason do not fit into the absolute project or do not wish to be a part of it. Dystopia is the fate of the realized utopia, the dark side of the bright utopian facade, the dark topos of ou - topos. When a marriage made of ideal love breaks apart or when we get annoyed with a vacation because of bad food in a hotel, then this is the disintegration of a small personal dream. Such dream can swiftly be replaced with other dreams and projects, with a new love and a new vacation. However, when a big utopian project such is the Communism ideology is set up, when all those who do not agree with the

project start being killed and terrorized in its name, when this project becomes a new religion, and founds its earthly reign in which it enslaves and harnesses masses of individuals, peoples and cultures, then the longing for absolute happiness turns into absolute unhappiness. The breakup of former Yugoslavia is a terrible and bloody divorce case that took place after the broken dream of the ideal self-government, socialism and inter-national love. Just as in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, one of the former Yugoslav nations saw itself more equal than the others and when the others, Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians, and now even the Kosovo Albanians did not want to live on such a farm, they started a war that led to annihilation. The disaster of the Balkan war whirled at the end of our century is the disaster of two dead utopias: the Communist ideology and the multinational state built on that ideology. Has the disintegration of the big Communist empire, the Soviet Union - at least until now peaceful and even merry - also signaled the merry end of any utopia? Was the death of Yugoslavia also the bloody death of the societal utopia? It seems not.

In the Croatian director Petar Krnjač's documentary on the refugee camp in Galičini there is no mention of the war that caused the refugee crisis in the neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is about the utopian dreams of young men and women who meet in the camp because of the misfortunes of war, fall in love with each other and see their life's happiness in the peaceful and happy West. What will happen afterwards with these young women and men and their dreams, we do not know nor do we ask ourselves while identifying with their fate. While we were watching the movie, we forgot about the war for a moment and dreamt together with the victims of war about a better life without destruction and death. So, the personal utopia of the Bosnian refugees from the collective camp in Galičini revived the end of the societal utopia called Yugoslavia.

However, the death of societal utopias of our century were not only revived by the personal utopias. In the arms damini of 1998 while the dead utopia of Yugoslavia is continuing its vampire dance on Kosovo, in the peaceful cities of Europe we do not dream about some idyllic corner on the warm South. Europe is drawing its new big societal dream. Euro is on the doormat. Plato's philosopher, dressed in penguin's suits of Brussels's black and white politicians have already written the scenario according to which the new unitary currency will bring the future political unity of the entire continent, first of the old national states and then of all the uncreated states that have emerged under the name of the totalitarian utopia and finally of the former banner of the biggest utopian project of our century, the present day Russia itself.

A small and fragile country, devastated by the first postutopian war, to which, quite undeservedly, the author of these lines belongs, has been accepted into the Council of Europe, but only after big postponements and humiliations, while the former utopian headquarters, Russia, has generously and ahead of time become a member during its war against Chechnia

The future European union is not similar to the ideological utopias of our century, nor to the ideological totalitarian empires such as the former Soviet Union or Yugoslavia. Here, one nation will truly not oppress another, there will be no dictatorship, death or imprisonment because of a diverging opinion. However, at the same time, in the middle of the dream a sobering reality is shoving through. Multinational global capital will rule in the new empire instead of ideology. Culture, identity, small languages, small economies and small nations, all that made Europe's identity - might some day be found to stand in the way of the realization

of the new utopia. And it has to be brought to life. Because the arrival of Euro is as certain as Amen, says a distinguished Eurocrat.

It seems that the ideal places for utopian dreams are islands, but so they are for awakening from dreams. Like the shadow of Huxley and Orwell, the British historian and a former banker Andrew Roberts in his eurocriticism already foretold what the future utopia could look like when it reaches the wished pragmatics after the shiny paradigmatics and idyllogistics that are today being built by the elites of the former enemies, France and Germany. In his dystopian vision of the future eurotopia England has lost its identity: the king as the symbol of the English sovereignty is exiled to New Zealand, Fish and Chips are forbidden, for the optatics 'crazy crew' a fine of 50 000 Euros is to be paid, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler and Jacques Delors are celebrated in schools as the winners of Europe, and identity cards with the BMA code and the 'preparation form' that has to be filled out before each sexual act have outreached the gleamless forecasts of the Brave New World and the 1984. The traps of the new utopia are not signaled only in literature but in life itself. A small and fragile country, devastated by the first postutopian war, to which, quite undeservedly, the author of these lines belongs, has been accepted into the Council of Europe, but only after big postponements and humiliations, while the former utopian headquarters, Russia, has generously and ahead of time become a member during its war against Chechnia.

At the end of our century, on the ruins of the ideological utopia, a new societal utopia is being born. Marx's Early Works have lost, Marx's Capital has won. The Eurodream is irresistible. The question remains what will become of those who for certain reasons cannot follow the global dream, to which the pragmatics of this dream is unachievable or painful. Because they love the nature more than they love the profit, because they do not want to rule, because they want to preserve tradition and culture, because they are attached to their place of birth, because they belong to the weaker sex, small nations, the unadapted ones or are in some other way unsuitable to join in the hectic new utopia - the Empire of the Money!

Nietzsche's Zarathustra's was saying: "Eternally rolls the wheel of Being". That was no utopia, but ontology. Will Zarathustra be saying tomorrow: "Eternally rolls the wheel of Profit"? The only hope might be in the knowledge: Dystopia is the ontology of the realized utopia but this will not stop us from dreaming.

Translated from the Croatian by Andreja Grubiša

DAMIRKA GRABIĆ JOLIC is a theoretician and professor of literature from Zagreb

The untranslatable Loneliness of Gulliverism

Ivana Sajko

My hands grasped along the stone walls of the cave and, in every crack, there is only the black abyss. Sometimes there is no air. Then I look for new air."

The enchanted island of utopia is not a special place constructed in one's imagination, but a quotidian reality in which *Somebody/ Anybody* looks for his/her right size. The land of odd sizes, a place in which everybody bears the room of his/her own wrong dimensions has existed from times immemorial, but emerges from the sea only at the moment when Gulliver feels the need to express himself, to be accepted and recognised. To create himself out of himself. That is why he circumnavigates the world, convinced that he is the only one who lacks the right size. The Gulliver motif has gradually metamorphosed into the Gulliver complex. To recognise his initial position, the one he was born with, the very position he was trying to deny until he died, did not mean to determine only his own, but the universal situation. But he was not aware of the fact that he was not special in any way, except in his own private religion, which he had invented so that he could mystify himself, separate himself from the others - the unrighted; that temporarily dispelled his mortal fear. In the loneliness that grew ever deeper with every new dialogue, his only comfort was the "impossibility" to understand what he cannot express". Himself. The premonitions that he really existed, he could not express in words. Doubtless, exorcism brought him to a state of *death*, but his intuition was telling him that the existence must exist somewhere. Evoking himself he discovered art, seeing it not as a hinder between himself and the world (since he did not know what either of the two were), but as a tool which would sooner or later help him discover his own world, and transfer it outside himself. Make it visible. Attainable. Make it a real place where one can live.

People are huge, supernaturally huge here. It remains when they talk to each other. And their shadows, on the walls of the cave, follow them as they move. I do not know what I look like. Nor what do these people look like."

On the attempt to create a new world. On art.

He was aware that he had no choice and no right to make big decisions. Time hurried him, not giving him neither the chance nor the skill to get to know the landscape around him. The immense panorama of the high seas encircled his island. He supposed that there were other inhabited lands on which he had not set his foot yet, since he did not know the way to them. He also believed that they were populated by warm-blooded creatures to whom he could not even send a message, because he did not know their language. He therefore decided to look into himself and find a place of conversation and answers there: the acknowledgement that he is necessary for the universal drama, and that within the universal life there is also his life over which he has power. Before the wish to create something new, exterior, there was panic in the face of the old, interior. Creation was the creative variation of the escape. He invoked art through a ever-wrought pondering of death, where Gulliver the last artist did not talk about the indefinite or the general, but about the individual, himself. He spoke, but did not *utter*; he searched, but could not reveal. He built a self-portrait in which he did not recognise himself. Nevertheless he continued to feel chosen, predetermined to utter himself, and to thoroughly detail himself, being formatted by art. But he never completed his work. He tried to sketch the architectural plan of his soul (almost paralysed by the desert of commencement), planning a strategy that would transpire him into the global reality, and place him in a sign understandable to all. The sign he would send towards the horizon as the revelation of his existence. The sign he wanted to find had his name written on it and spoke of Gulliver to *Someone/Anyone* who could not remember the universal tranquillity, who could not remember ever having chosen a life wedged between two variations of death. He was indeed chosen by others, by the funny body and the *assured* mind, by the evolution, the state, the history, the progress directed towards somebody else's future: by the coercion that he must believe in all these notions. He decided to ease the coercion with the presence of his soul. His reason was simple: apathy towards the predetermined world, towards the fugile existence, towards the unanswerable wind in the sails of his ship, towards the inertia

resulting from the fact that he lasts for too short a while in a world which he cannot influence. To express oneself, to transpire oneself into the world through the language of art, meant to act. Moreover, it meant lasting in the visible form, into which he would draw the structure of his inner self. Thus he would throw off the burden of unanswered questions and names. He would distribute his substantial situation in the actual time and space. But the words he chose, the syntax he used, and finally the language with which he knecored at the doors of reality were still his own specific and untranslatable idiom. The world saw him acting, it noticed his facial imitation of speech, but still could not hear him. Gulliver / *Somebody / Almost Anybody* could not find the signs that would encompass himself. Finally came out of himself and start speaking in the perfect universal language he



believed was spoken by the public and verified reality, which he did not know how to approach. He remained mute and desperate, accumulating the junkyards of untranslatable sentences.

*Not much will be left of me.
I will become a part of the walls of the cave.
I will be the echo and the shadow
Together with the rest of the people here.
Who have already become shadows and echoes.**

On the sophistry of shadows and forms. On theatre.



Perhaps theatre was supposed to manifest life. It did not begin with the creation of the possible, but with the reproduction of the possible, putting Gulliver centre stage. It followed the ingrained belief that his presence would confirm the production of reality. It made him a character, a protagonist specialized in the troubles of a single, his own scene. Although filled with countless characteristics, it was still only a second-hand and insufficient reflection of himself. Only a layer - a surface. The print of the impotent artist. The artist worked on the creation of his own unknown, feeling the impetus to open up and extract the unknown incarcerated in the straitened human years. From the solitude he created a creature on the stage: small, but satisfied with himself, defined, but still dependent upon the faith and superstition of his observers. His "I am", his personified reminder, was an ethereal shadow of the anyway unestablished form of existence of the "real" man - the man of maladjusted size. The stage Gulliver consisted of attributes, he was immortal, born within a situation that could go on repeating forever. He was made up in a theatrical mask, and its precise appearance automatised him.

made him predictable and empty, in no way similar to man, since he was not afraid for himself. He did not have the consciousness of his existence, nor was he trying to find it. It was sought by his creator, the artist, getting lost in his own Gulliver form, asking himself: "How! How did I lose my private 99 1/2? How is it possible that I can find neither a word which would express what I am, nor a verb which would articulate everything I do? Is there no language for my endogenous?" The tragic Gulliver character had to admit his defeat, for although made on the model of the creator, he still could not save him from the mistakes he would fall into every time he tried to console of himself. Both the artist and his fixed work of art found themselves tied by the same force - the energy of the situation which they cannot influence, and which still conditions and animates them, even when they dream of representing or multiplying the most crucial substantial situation - the verb "to be" through art. The character has imperceptibly become the actor himself, another Gulliver. But the audience has not noticed just when the stage began to quake: just when the actor began to tremble with fear that the audience, failing to recognise him, would leave him between the reality they do not acknowledge (because it is his and his alone), and the illusion he himself abandoned (because it did not belong to him). He stopped halfway between being himself and being somebody else. He remained on the stage, turned to the audience, hands full of himself, observing how the confession of his own life was becoming somebody else's history, somebody else's drama. In contact with theatrical air, his gestures and words became alienated. He begged them to believe him, to address him by his name, searched for the universal language to explain them that at the moment they were watching the last situation of his verb "to be", he fell to his knees, burst into tears, and the audience was still applauding his actor's skill in crying. With every attempt to express himself he would abort his own existence. He was trying to represent and describe it, to get rid of the burden of the priest or subsequently attributed characters, he was trying simply to be, not doing and doing uttering anything. But he was constantly bumping into reality which did not recognise his inner code, into art which did not have at its disposal the ontological expression and the essential verbs. It described them, but did not use them. It did not find for him the exit from the inner world, surfeited with self-reflection. His Gulliver unloppably grew and hosted the sails of his ship, realizing to sail yet another harbour, onto the docks of which he could not move its ropes, onto the land of which he could not disembark, because of his always wrong dimensions.

It would be interesting to know what I look like. But I somehow cannot reach the ray of light that reaches into the cave, because people are in my way, unintentionally, I think, I hope. But it could be also terrible to see what I look like. Because then I could see that I am just like the rest of them here.*

On parallel worlds. On beautiful insanity.

Gulliver creates in expectation of the acknowledgement that does not come. Solitude is the only actual relationship between him and others, between his and billion other Gulliverian microcosms that exist in the same context, the one between two deaths. The impression of their difference rises from their impossibility to communicate and to compare themselves. An integrating system for the comparison of souls does not exist. None of them can affirm himself/herself, because the only conversation s/he has is his/her own monologue. Gulliver lives frustrated by induction, frightened by the lack of evidence, hoping that he is not just a dream, but a continuity of the reality others perhaps feel as well. When he wants to articulate himself, he loses himself, becomes somebody else, even some third self in the eyes of those who are equally transformed in his eyes. Perplexed by the reflections, he gathers his failed attempts, those artistic abortions and unfinished new worlds. He decides to become his own object, to create yet another face, and happily and his long voyage - to archon in the safe bay between the two eyes. And therefore, having learned the lesson of the characters that died on stage, he invents that face, the one that does not fight, aware that it does not exist. He creates a psychic mask which replaces the artistic expression of his elusive verb "to be". The mask is no longer him. It was created by him; as a witness to the solitude, as a friend of the same height. They speak the same language, and he understands when it affirms: "You are." Gulliver completely disappears from the vast and desolated world for which he had fought so long; he does not need it any more. And while leaving it, gazing at the reverse of his mask, returning a float smile; the enchanted island peacefully floats in him.

Yes, I went the cave.
There I knew where I am.
I ran groped, through darkness...*

*Joan R. D. Laing's patient, trying to give arguments for her schizophrenia, from Ronald David Laing's book "The Divided Self", 1965.

Translated from the Croatian by Lada Davidovska

JUDITH SZABO is a contributing editor of *Frieze*

You have in front of you a collage composed of photographs and fragments selected from the interviews or other kinds of texts (essays, analyses, reviews) regarding several theatre directors and groups that were published in the performing arts magazine *Frakcija*. Fragments concerning the poetical fractions in the Croatian theatre - which have, in recent years, been recognised and singled out in their texts by the dramaturgists, teatrologists and theatre critics of the younger generation gathered around the magazine - are juxtaposed with no intention to contrast them as arguments in some fictitious polemics between the authors selected or perhaps to compose as a manifesto of some theatrical movement, that actually does not exist. In spite of all mutual differences, the (apparent?) incompatibility of worldviews and theatrical aesthetics, the authors singled out from the mainstream of the Croatian theatre share exactly that very

quality of being fractions of the mainstream of the Croatian theatre; they are more, less, or not at all radical, their consciousness mostly raised, but rarely proclaimed openly.

To pick out only a few names means, of course, to skip the majority. We omitted the so-called Croatian theatrical mainstream that dull-wittedly flows, supported and maintained by state or local administration, in most of the Croatian theatrical institutions. Our

FRAGMENTS ON FRACTIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE READING OF THE COLLAGE

intention is to draw attention to fractions, the troubled current; therefore the Croatian theatrical mainstream is the subject only of the few introductory fragments. Then, we have omitted several foreign directors with temporary employment in Croatia, but also most of the so-called independent, non-institutional, or off-productions, which were believed only two years ago to bring

fresh blood into the closed circulatory system of the Croatian theatre, while today it is growing ever more evident that they have been draining it away into their own closed blood systems: the populist and commercial projects whose openness to a more contemporary theatrical expression depends on the part of the population it addresses, as well as the performances of slender production means that spring up only as life saving solutions for "unemployed" actors and directors, and ambitious but failed resale of the "alternative", "new", "different" and by-other-meaningless-concepts-designated theatre, which strives to be fundamentally different from the one protected by the theatrical institutions. We do not want to deprecate the importance of those omitted in any other context, except for the one we want to designate here.

FACTS

Đilva Boban - Theatre director and professor of Movement at the Academy of Drama Art in Zagreb. In the seventies and early eighties especially active as the founder, leader, and director of one of the most important Croatian alternative groups of the day, *Sevings*. In the nineties, from the *Amélie* machine to *Melio*, he systematically tests the subject of war and post-war period, and with the position of the individual, especially of woman, in the traumatic states of crisis of the community. She is presently working on the production of *Alma Mahler*, based on the text of the contemporary Croatian playwright Maja Gregl. She has recently shown a growing interest in the period of modernism, the late 19th and the early 20th century.



Borna Baletić - *2 Legends*, Croatian National Theatre, Varaždin

Branko Brezovec - In the late eighties, together with Gordana Vrak, one of the co-founders of the new cult Brezovec's group *Coccolomoco*, founded in the mid-seventies, starts the festival of the new theatre *Enokaz*, which, in the glossary published in the second issue of *Frakije*, describes him with a simple note: "The director whose productions were performed on almost every *Enokaz*". Because of his radical subverting of the traditions of the Croatian theatrical mainstream, Brezovec has so far



Đilva Boban - *The Bookcase*, Director

been denied and rejected by his own environment, where, the fact that he is the Croatian director who most frequently works on the international scene notwithstanding, he directs performances mostly in independent productions. This year he directed, in the theatre of Chaptes Arts Centre in Cardiff, the performance *Electro*, co-authoring Euripides' *Tragedy and O'Neill's* bourgeois play *Mourning Becomes Electro*, and in Croatia the performance *So, So*, based on the fragments of three books by Sophie Calle, as well as *Caesar*, a trilateral Croatian-Slovene-Macedonian co-production, based on the texts by William Shakespeare, Bertolt Brecht, and the Slovene playwright Slavko Grum.

Đilva Buljan - Dramatist, theatre critic, contributing editor of *Frakije*, he has in recent years turned to directing. After the performance *Name at the Tip of the Tongue*, directed in Slovenia, a kind of a study of the sexual realisation, he came to *Teater 87D*, a theatre institution which has lately been systematically working on the promotion of a new generation of Croatian directors, actors and playwrights, where he directed the performance *Phaedra* (played: Radica Trečetaeva-Buljan), and, this year, *Pavlov's Pigeon*. Several months ago Đilva Buljan became the artistic director of drama at the Croatian National Theatre in Split.

Borut Šeparović/MONTAŽIROB performing unit - After the first performance, *Vatrotreba*, followed by the gallery performances (*Football. Boot in the Gallery. No Distance...*), and appearing on the Zagreb Dance Week festival, Director and choreographer Borut Šeparović and his group won the *Enokaz* contest for the co-production of the projects of young theatre artists in 1991, and produced the Ilap opera *101*, based on the *Sophocles* and *Melior's* *Philoctetes*. The video-clip "Croatia in Flames" and the three phases of the work-in-progress project *Everybody Goes 2 Dacia from Moscow 2 San Francisco* (Mix, Remix, and EuroBody) made MONTAŽIROB the most internationally requested product of the Croatian theatre, at the same time absolutely ignored in its own environment. Last year, the most successful Croatian group in the area of dance

and physical theatre began its new "performing mission" (1997-2000), the work-in-progress *Frakije*, in two phases: "Mobile" (dance sections) and "Convertible" (acting sections). The opening night of the complete performance *Frakije* has been announced for the spring 1999.

Borna Baletić - Artistic manager of the Croatian National Theatre in Varaždin who has the merit of being the head of the first national theatre institution to open their to the generation of young directors. In Varaždin, Baletić himself has just staged three of his most important productions, *Ušom*, *Twelfth Night*, and *2 Legends* (of Michelangelo Buonarroti and Christopher Columbus), with the latter two showing his interest in the most important Croatian playwright of the 20th century, Miroslav Krleža, and through his subversive texts, stemming from the atmosphere of the First World War, in theatrical expressionism as well.



Branko Brezovec - *Emma*, Essays

Borna Medvešek - In the late eighties and early nineties one of the most sought after Croatian theatre and film actors. In 1991, he founded the private theatre *Wini of an Eye*, which attracted much attention with the installation of the monstrously grotesque *Amphipous* in the time of air raids on Zagreb. What followed were the performances for children *Frigolet* and *Cumby and Borey*, but he scored a howling success with the audience

Mantabrot:
Everybody Goes
2 Discs From
Moscow 2 San
Francisco

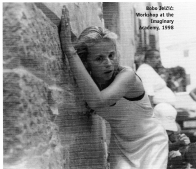
of all ages and the enthusiasm of the theatre critics with the amazing performance *Racket*, with the company of the Zagreb Youth Theatre. Medvedek has recently in the Puppet Theatre in Rijeka finished yet another performance under the strange title *Overshoemaker Martin* that has developed "out of nothing" with the help of his imagination and the actors' improvisation.



Natalia Lušetić - Actress and one of the leading mine artists in Croatia, she studied acting in London, and mine in Paris with Lucie. In 1991, she returned to Croatia and she joined forces with the actor Matko Roguž and founded, as mood soon be proven by the Croatian audience, critics, cultural and political establishment, the most acceptable private or independent theatre, with, at the time very significant, name of Teatar Exit. The first performance she directed, *Imago*, was based on the motifs from *The Knots* by R. B. Loring. The mine performance for four actors dealt with stress situations of the business people, and it attained a success that got her the most prestigious Croatian Theatre prize, and procured first performances abroad for Teatar Exit. Her next performance, *Lost*, was closer to the language of the so-called physical theatre, but much further from the success achieved with the *Imago*. Natalia Lušetić has been working with Karina Holla in Amsterdam for some time now, and we are looking forward to the new Teatar Exit performances.

Božo Jelčić - After a period of searching for his own directing poetics, in which he created interesting, but incomplete performances (*B. Strauss' Tourist Guide*, *Arjoun's Gorgas*, *Bächner's Wojczek*), has in two of his last productions, *Observations* and *Retardations*, developed gradually as work-in-progress projects in the aforementioned Cocteau National Theatre in Versailles and Teatar &TD, managed to create an authentic theatrical poetics, and is therefore considered by many the most interesting director of the younger generation. All Jelčić's performances have so far been co-sponsored by his permanent associate, the dramaturgist Nataša Rajković. At the moment they are both preparing to continue the work on *Retardations*, and a new project provisionally entitled *Town Within Town*, already begun in the workshop on the subject of the site-specific theatre at the Imaginary Academy in the Serbian town of Gostoljan.

SCHMRTZ THEATRE - Although that name has until recently been used by the mostly student theatre group of changing personnel, as the time went on under cover of the SCHMRTZ THEATRE or even independently of that name, but still closely linked with it by common participation in several projects, a kind of the movement of a whole range of groups which is different performing forms (from happenings to actions aimed at social and political criticism, from performances and concerts to dance theatre performances), and with the varying intensity of aggressiveness or gentleness, express the attitudes and release the emotional potential of the youngest generation of Croatian theatre people. Within the movement, we should pay particular attention to the self-parodying leader of the so-called mainstream of the SCHMRTZ THEATRE, Mario Kovač, but also to his sister Maja, leader of the female group *Not Your Bitch*. Thanks, among other things, to the ever more intense activity of the SCHMRTZ people, the first Festival of the alternative theatre expression (FACE) was this year held in Zagreb.



Božo Jelčić:
Workshop at the
Imaginary
Academy, 1996

CONTEXT

Borut Šeganović/MONTAŽISTROV

performing artist

Interview "Theatre of Transition",

Frakcija 2, April 1998

The six year period of the group's activity corresponds to the time of transition. Firm value systems and ideologies slowly disappear from our reality... In Croatia, from 1989 to 1995, we experienced the pre-war tensions, a never-declared brutal war, and then a period in which we were told that there was no war, but what we lived in was not peace, and finally a period of great victories and the long expected end of the war. Being one of the post-communist societies we also fit very well into the chaotic picture of the "wild East". Not only the society, but also individuals are impoverished both financially and spiritually; we are trading state socialism for state capitalism... We are importing from the West the out of date technology and the kitsch habits of the crazed consumer: we were taught to accept as true only what is present in the mass media - bad politicians, bad entertainment, and the true winners of the "cold war": the MTV, McDonald's, and Coca.

Ilvica Bobas

Interview "Theatre as the Place of Confession", Frakcija 6/7, December 1997

Politics has at the very beginning of the nineties violently entered our lives, left its mark on them and radically changed them. It tore some apart, destroyed and killed many. It was impossible to live at that time and not engage in politics.

Ilvica Buljan

Ilvica Buljan's text "Institutional and Independent Scene", Frakcija 8, June 1998

The new states or communities within federal states (Catalonia, Quebec, Flanders) strive to establish new forms of national identity. It is interesting that the very same countries are the foci of new artistic practices (Slavonia is usually cited together with them) and that start discussion about the relation of the national culture and contemporary art, which by its nature is not confined to the national borders... In the late eighties and early nineties, Croatia was, in spite of the initial similarities to the aforementioned communities, left behind, and its today's problems can unfortunately be more easily

compared to the problems of the countries behind what was once the Iron curtain... In Croatia, in congruence with the reactionary political processes, the destroyed contemporary artistic scene has not succeeded in imposing itself as a means of democratisation. The cultural policies of the western democracies are created through the relations of the groups that advocate the preservation of the traditional cultural models and these that strive to introduce contemporary models... Partly because of the legacy of the past, but more because of the prevailing conservatism, not only of the party in power, but also of the intellectual scene, the cultural policy in Croatia wears itself out insisting on the first model.

Borna Bulatić

Interview "You have to be Registered Somewhere", Frakcija 1, April 1998

We can talk against the institution, fight it. However, our way of thinking brings us back to it. It would be nice to become independent, but running from the institution of the theatre is like running from the institution of the state. Once you step out of one, you have to enter another. You have to be registered somewhere... In the repertory theatre reigns, first of all, the predictability. It is about the kind of spiritual certainty in which more and more circulates less and less. It begins with the Academy of Dramatic Art. There a young person, in fear of the unknown, starts thinking about how to do what is expected of him/her with as little pain and effort as possible. To work as it is done. Firstdegree stresses that word "it" as the indicator of the low-quality and non-creative thinking. The Croatian theatre is flooded with cracker barrel wisdom and wise guys who know how something is done. No one in particular, completely lost in space and time, is doing something and thinking hard. It is not the result of any school, tradition, convention. It would be great if there were a traditional system of teaching that would be taught at the Academy. It is a cultural lethargy and the lack of information... Empty talk...

Branka Brezovec

Goran S. Prista's text "The Nineties", Frakcija 2, June 1996
Brezovec is one of the most prolific

Croatian directors, only ahead... Brezovec has never been involved with enthusiasm by the Zagreb repertory theatre, neither by the producers nor by the actors... A finely conceived theatre project in which the actor does not serve the character, but the director, i.e. the concept, requires a different production and reproduction of the scenic material. The "noble dialecticism" that would transform the functions of characters into the functions of performance with serious irony and thus make the presence of the performer's individuality dominant, did not fall on fertile ground. We should explain this misunderstanding by the lack of communication among the traditions, because, with the same requirements, Brezovec was more successful in Macedonia, where the middle-European logocentric content exerts less influence... Brezovec, leaving for the southern regions, Macedonia, solved a major problem - the problem of the logocentric acting tradition...

Natasha Lulečić:
Imago,
Theatre
Belt



Natasha Lulečić

Goran S. Prista's text "From the Centre to the Margin", Frakcija 3, December 1995

Dissatisfied with the way they were treated, with the inadequate use made of their gifts (or skills), with the lack of interest on the part of directors in the methods of acting or improvisation, the actors left their home theatres and founded their own troupes. Out of that originated the performances in which skills, alone, and the art of acting

are best manifested. **There has been a sudden enlargement of the vocabulary** by the mime, acrobatics, and music making, and the performances were created either on the basis of the actors' improvisation, or by the mimeographic co-operation of all the members of the troupe. The fastest to attain a success was the Teatar Exit. Two projects of the actors, now also the director, Ratko Raguž belong to the sphere of the so-called off-theatre in the best sense of the term: they were based as "marginal" plays (Berkeft: *Secedence* and Godben: *Chucker-Outs*) that require major contribution of the actors, because their artistic achievement is not particularly significant outside the context of the theatre performance. Both projects are "populist", attractive, with highly polished acting and, as was eventually demonstrated, commercial. The third, and in my opinion the most important project of the Teatar Exit is *Imago*, directed by Nataša Lubetić.

Borut Šeparović/MONTAŠTRAJ performing unit
Intervju "Theatre of Transition"
 That we act in this way is above all thanks to the experience of the important international performances at both Zagreb festivals (Turizkar, festival of the new theatre, and the Dance Week Festival) in the latter half of the eighties... In an effort to preserve the peculiarities of its own artistic expression, but also because of the peculiarities in the production of our works of art, the activity of the company was **from the very beginnings conceived as non-institutional**, i.e. its production was independent of the state and city institutions, so as early as 1992 Montaštraj was registered as one of the first private theatres in Croatia. It was thus legally (at least in art) put on the same level with other public theatres...

Boba Jelčić
Intervju "Observations of the Retardations", *Frankfurt* 8. June 1998
 Every static existence is clearly defined circumstances turns into a habit, the habit sooner or later inevitably into boredom, and boredom is the vestibule of death... Texts of plays, directors' concepts, repertoires: they have all become closed sets and finished things. I just reached to state of affairs. And I tried to return to the beginning, to ask myself some fundamental questions: why I do the very thing I do and why in that way... I think that **it is necessary to try and change things from within, from within the very institutions**, and not from without. I do not see my work within the frame (or restrictions) of the revolutionary modernist notions.

Eliza Bajani
 Phaedra, STD
 Theatre



SUBJECTS:

WAR AND PEACE

Branko Brezovec

Trica Buljan's text "Fragments on the two faces of Phaedra", Frakcija 2, June 1998 (on the performance "Real")

Baš! is just a huge body, voracity itself, a head down from the Abyss and the Fall, with the oval cavity as a regressive symbol of the sexual. Dramatic topography is replaced by a mythic one, characters are reduced to functions, and the Brecht's urban ritual is taken back to the mythic age by means of an ellipsis. Brezovec's Baš! treats the Fall of man.

Branko Brezovec

Goran Štefanovič's text on the play Stachanovka (directed by Brezovec in 1996), Frakcija 5, June 1997

The subject of the play is irrationality (psychological, social, political, and historical). It particularly portrays the seductive **irrationality of nationalism**. It dramatizes the ritual of *sponagmos* (eating of the body of the boy Dionysian), and the ritual of *omophagy* (eating of the raw meat). In a certain way, both rituals happened during the war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. For the ancient Greeks, these rituals were regenerative: It was believed that the torn body is reborn by a miracle. For us today, *omophagy* is a socially barren and destructive orgy.

Trica Buljan

Interview "Theatre is a Place of Confession" (on Trica Buljan's performances in the nineties)

Both *Nečudo* as the eve of war, in which the premonition of what was to happen was inscribed - the tragedy of the blind and disdained authorities that walk on its own destruction, and the sufferings and the revenge of a crazed mother who lost all her children in the war through the fault of politics and these authorities, and *Homotermine* - a masochistic-confession of a young intellectual in a besieged city among the debris of Europe at the end of the 20th century, who performs a kind of today's Hamlet *Mousetrap*, and *The Death of Vukoslav - Stage Sage* about Vukovar, and *The Way Things Now Are* - a series of war stories which, in spite of the intent for them to be suppressed, emerge from the subconscious mind of the actors during their quest for their own identities, lost in war, and *The Bookkeeper's Daughter* in New York -

the drama of a raped girl from Bosnia, whom an American family uses to vent their own frustrations and traumas on - all these performances speak, and sometimes even yell, about what happens with a human being, an individual in a time when an insane politics is at work. The consequences are tragic, but just as tragic is the indifference of those in power, of the capital, of the government, of state and personal interests towards the sufferings and pangs of an individual. Antigone and *Medea* deal with similar problems in the post-war period which is in a way even more traumatic of the war. Because **already during the war all the masks are taken off, and after the war even the most firmly attached ones**. Everything that was hidden during the war, everything covered and veiled, everything we did not perceive, absorbed in the struggle for dear life, under the influence of adrenaline and fear for our lives, driven crazy by the horror of sufferings, everything gradually emerges and becomes known after the war.

Borna Baletić

Jovana Stajić's text "In the Discourse of the Stronger", Frakcija 8, June 1998 (on 2 legends)

The story of legends is conceived in the story of utopia, which is embodied in the exceptionality of the genius in contrast to the indolent majority and its atavistic interests and instincts. In contrast to the mass that destroys ideals by the very incidence of its presence and as the distinctive characteristic of its own humanlessness chooses the global current of thinking, the inert pragmatism motivated by vanity or greed, listening of the ventriloquism of the bowels, inoculated on mass empty phrases, afraid of putting its own thought into words. It is precisely this intimate thought haunts Buonarroti and Columbus, since it shows the distance between the temporary I and the potential I, the latter always being the more desired one, always the more egotistical and more ethereal one, always out of reach. Untouchable, as a cruel reminder of the impossibility of our ephemerality, of the futility verbalised by the word of the Stranger - the negative principle that recognises the reverse of every ideal, that embeds the side effects of lofty aspirations, that affirms the pointlessness by its share of the contempla-

tive light and creates utopia. **Why bother for so short an existence? Why search for divine signs in the spheres of the permanent absence of God?**

Borut Šeparevič

Interview "Theatre of Transition"

The principle of our public activity was theatricalisation, i.e. the transfer and taking over the phenomena of the football (pop) culture onto the stage. **Thus, the theatricalisation of politics, sports, pop music, dance, film, video clip aesthetics, discotheques, cheap entertainment, violence, sex, pornography, glamour, etc.**

Trica Buljan

Željko Wašberg's text "Perfect Lovers", Frakcija 4, March 2007

The creative procedure used to construct *Phaedra* is in no way less subversive, although traditional, classical aesthetic ways were used. Infiltrating his own discourse into the historical forms, the director made them less transparent, less lofty; the subversion of the tradition is already in the very gesture of its appropriation. *Phaedra* and



Željko Wašberg:
Retardation,
STD Theatre

Hippolytus are two figures of classical antiquity who are perhaps closest to us today... ***Phaedra* is the formula of rejected desire**. She represents the Epicurean and psychoanalytical plot; unfulfilled desire produces an internal corrosive illness... One must bear in mind that the mouth we are kissing is the same mouth that bites and tears. *Phaedra* adopts that later premonition which reduces to egoism all noble feelings we firmly cling to and exposes the selfish foundation of sincerity, friendship, love. *Il n'y a pas d'amour; il n'y a pas d'amour* - that is yet another adamant contemporary answer in the same psychosexual sphere.

Bobo Zeljic

Interview "Observations of Antidations"

I would like to start with the basics. Why stage *Hamlet*? If someone killed my father, or if I were infected with AIDS, I might think that way. *Hamlet* has other problems as well, but what torments him most originates there. Therefore, until someone murders my father, I am daily confronted with lots of minor and apparently banal problems, and to me, they are much more important than the *Hamlet* questions... And what exactly is banal? **What is banal to me, does not necessarily have to be banal to you. And the other way round.**

Nataša Lučetić

Interview "The Hiding Circle" (about the performance "Imago")
Kupples came to it spontaneously. Going through Laing's *The Knots*, associative thinking took us from there to the stress hypothesis. The stress hypothesis is very much present in our society. That is the opening scene of the performance... It is common knowledge that people living in the world of the fast information flow suffer from stress. Man is perceiving things in an irrational way less and less... they no more have the plausibility of meanings, they are increasingly rationalised. That rationalisation is the cause of the attempts to justify the state of affairs. I am fascinated by some stereotypes and all their props. Brief-cases, for example...

Rene Medvedek

Jirica Buljan's text "On Medvedek", *Prozjeka* 4, March 1997

His motifs tell us much about the competence of his theatre.

Ecology. (children's) **story and love.** In various orders of importance, appear in all three plays (*Strigoland*, *Crumbly* and *Bloomy*, *Dočekaj*). **Ecology** is a personal feeling of responsibility for the world, but also the style of his performance. Medvedek's aversion to technology and the use of second-hand materials and objects are not a matter of necessity, but an exercising of choice. The children's story based on a well-known or "self-devised" model can be read both in the former sense and as a metaphor. **Love** as a motif is intertwined with the first two subjects. Sky in a parental way and consciously sexual, love it, in some of



the best moments, cruel and destructive in an almost Genet-like manner.

Rene Medvedek
Buckel, Zagreb
Youth Theatre

Rene Medvedek

Interview "Winking of the Eye", *Prozjeka* 4, April 1996

I would simply like to experience or go through as much of my life as possible on foot. As my father in law, who is shift manager in the Elka and is not into philosophy, would put it: "Lad, what do you need a car for, you can't move in space if you ain't got time". That struck me. And I follow this feeling that we move in space more than time allows us: fax machines, satellites, lasers, vitamins. We eat squids from Japan with hothouse tomatoes from the Netherlands and mayonnaise from Switzerland. It's, like, swell, heaven on earth, but you actually do not know what you drink and whom you pay. And everything has its place and its price. Fairy tales are aware of that, and that is why I like them. It was not a coincidence that the first performance of the *Wink of an Eye* was a fairy tale. *The Winter Fairy Tale*. At the end, kids realise that **there is no point in keeping the snowman in the fridge all year round** and that it is only natural that in spring snowmen go among the clouds for the summer "hibernation", so that they can come back next year. You have to give up some things so as not to lose them.

THEATRE AESTHETICS

Branko Brezovec

Jirka Buljan's text "Direct and Reverse: the Art of Editing in Theatre"

Brezovec's thinking in images or staging of the polyphonic interior world is nothing else than the conscious "idea of editing", as Meyerhold put it... Brezovec's **associativity** is not far from Brecht's "pure reason". Neither of them hesitates to offer the spectators the most complex hypotheses, using in the text of the play and on the scene all means of editing. It is the basic principle of constructing the epic theatre, in contrast to the organic unity of Aristotelian theatre. A performance teaches the spectator by the fact that it was performed, and not because it was seen. This Brecht's theorem indicates that the actor is the centre of the "thought process". Brezovec enlarges it by Artaud's utopia regarding the actor's body which, in the tissue of nerves and blood must let us see the thought that passes through it. The actor is therefore not the interpreter of a role, he is a go-between in the communication between two worlds, the outside reality and the "inner space", the reality of the stage and the spectator's imagination. Acting is thus seen as **editing of the contradictory elements**, a reflection of not only virtuality of the characters, but also social production (Brezovec is an author prone to the analysis of social, political, and national relations)... Brezovec's directing is a treatment of thoughts (texts), in his vision unusually close to the procedure of cut and paste, i.e. of film editing. The editing is done fast and slowly, between formation and deconstruction, between flow and spatiality. A collage of texts, i.e. the "new" Brezovec text has an edited duration similar to that of automatic writing. The point which connects Brezovec's procedure to Brecht and the Surrealists is the absolute continuity of thought in which we can see that emphasising of certain fragments is necessary in order to **break with the straight line**.

Branko Brezovec

Goran S. Prizel's text "The Nineties" The performance *Three Slaves* fitted perfectly into the trend of multimedia productions at the time; the **redistribution of the performing channels** was done in the performing space - the actors on stage, actors on screens, video-manipulat-

ed recordings and sound filters as microphones were allotted equally important status. Such a dramatic distribution found opponents among the enthusiasts of the integrity of the play and the actor... What was evident in the performances *Boat* and *Prince Armand* was Brezovec's giving up the set decoration and entering the rudimentary areas of (still dramatic) corporeality and expression. The body of a performer is not the object of design, but the **destruction of the possible pleasure in the image**. The spectator is disturbed by disharmony and impermanent primitivism of expression, not on the level of ritual, but by the very denial of the ritual as a possible escape into otherness. Not having an ideology or destroying it deliberately creates the new ideology of disgust and elementary expressions...

Branko Brezovec

Jirka Buljan's text "Fragments about the Two Faces of Enrolment" Brezovec's *Boat* is also based on the principle of **new dramaturgy**. The performance develops from the exuberant semantic jargon of dramatic literature.

Borna Baletić

Interview "Too slow to be Regarded Somewhere" Thought, idea in the form of words does not have to be convincing, but it is most easily transmitted in that way. I therefore choose a text on the basis of which I will make the performance, but I **try not to think in terms of the text**, but in terms of the idea I wish to express... However, directors often choose a text as a model of expressing some other idea, which is not inherent in that text. What happens is various forms of theatrical rape, and one wonders why they do not write their own text.

Boba Jelčić

Goran S. Prizel's text "De the Invis: Realism and Triviality on Stage", *Prokije* 6, June 1997 If it is true that scenes in *Observations* were created through the joint effort of the director and the actors in producing situations and dialogues, based on actors' own stories, then each performance is in a way a repetition of life. Ultimately, each scene is a repetition of some conceivable reality. Regarding the contents, each scene is brought to almost absolute im-

tation (repetition) of a conceivable, real event. This procedure **follows the realistic tradition**, but it is also close to what Mike Leigh calls the **enhanced realism**, the realism which is so realistic that it becomes surreal.

Boba Jelčić

Interview "Observations of Actorisation"

Although it is impossible to make the sharp division in practice, perhaps one might say that it is for us to work on the idea and the form, and for actors to work on the content. In which way will *Observations* further develop? I haven't a clue! Actually, I would like to come to the point where the thing you do just transforms into its own form, that it takes shape of its own accord. One still needs to



Jirka Buljan
Antagon, National Theatre
in Varaždin

shape it, and thus necessarily controls the creation of a performance, so people could stand to see it. We are striving to make it take shape of its own accord... The realism we deal with is at the same time both realistic (but not real!) and poetic, theatrical, or perhaps the best term would be **imagic**. **In the real, stronger than the fictitious in that performance, or is it the other way round?** I think that you should remain fair to the source, to the thing you started with when constructing a performance, i.e. to the actor, who is the source of all his characters speaks about. In that sense the actor is in some parts of the *Reformations* the actual source of his own self. Majority of the audience will perceive the performance as fictitious. And further viewings reveal the power of the real in it. Which, I dare say, is in the *Reformations* stronger than the fictitious. **Because the actor is, quite literally**

by the author of his character! And therefore it is important that he/she signs it by his/her true name.

Borut Šepanović

Interview "Theatre of Transition"
Contemporary performer is at the same time both the subject and the object of the performance, and therefore in that case we can talk not only about representation, but also exhibition. He is neither actor nor dancer, he is both - a complete stage persona that puts all of himself into the performance. His theatrical act is a total stage act, based primarily on his body, which, in the stage action, is not and cannot be guided exclusively by his skills, but also by the personal attitude of the performer. In our opinion, in the period of transition **body** is the only remaining safe haven, and the engine of the soul liberated from ideology and stigma...

Borut Šepanović/MONTAŽSTROJ performing solo

Goce S. Potaš's text "The Whories"
During the three year work with old and new performers (with-in-progress Everybody Goes 2 Disco From Moscow 2 San Francisco), Šepanović has developed his choreography language in the direction of the so-called high-risk dance, the combination of the physically demanding elements of dance, sports, combat, and violence... For the first time, the choreographer who did not use the old tradition of the contemporary dance appeared in Croatia; rather, he found the material for his choreography in everyday world. Šepanović consciously put this material through many repetitions, continuations, fragmentation and the like, in order to take it to the radical stage reality which cannot leave anybody indifferent.

Ivica Bužan

Interviewed by Ivica Bužan.
"Pasolini's Theatre Manifesto"
The most important question is what is the new Pasolinian theatre. He himself defined it as the theatre of words... The theatre of words is best defined in contrast to the duality blooming theatre and theatre of gesture and scream... The only thing left to Pasolini's theatre is to rise to the almost total absence of the stage action, like the classical Greek theatre, which

again calls for discretion in directing or its reduction to the necessary that leads straight to the abolition of the ritual... "One should partake of the performances in the theatre of words with the idea of listening rather than watching - it is the prerequisite for better understanding of words and exchanging thoughts which are essentially the real characters of that kind of theatre." Pasolini's definition is a paraphrase of the definition of the good tragedy.

Beno Medvedek

Ivica Bužan's text "On Medvedek"
Medvedek's thinking procedure is a certain bricolage. Bricolage is the term for the kind of amateur work in improvised technique, in special circumstances and with adapted materials. Bricolage is an expression of a joyful art and pleasure, a concept which in the early nineties was called noble dilettantism. Its most prominent representatives are Joseph Nagy and the Norwegian group Rikstuppen. Medvedek's theatre is somewhere in the middle. The choreographed story links him to Nagy. Although the performers do not use dance vocabulary in any of the productions, body is the central medium of storytelling. The performing technique is a puzzle of mime, pantomime, and film acting (especially in the comical and sentimental scenes). A certain old-fashioned quality links this theatre to Nagy (both Medvedek and Nagy prefer to return to the beginning of the century, they are not very fond of the present-day world), while the lack of the performing perfection is turned into an advantage, similar to the Norwegians. Further similarity that can be noticed is the infantilism, but there is an essential difference between radical investigative orientation of Rikstuppen and Medvedek's firm predisposition towards a repertory for children.

WHY THEATRE?

Borut Šepanović

Interview "Theatre of Transition"
In the time when the Berlin Wall was falling down, and the so-called "antibureaucratic revolution" was announcing apocalyptic events on the territory of former Yugoslavia, we experienced Montahtraj, with much effort, as a football theatre, an avant-garde revolutionary collective, a cult of Spartan strength and beauty... The **athletics of the heart** was, and it remained, the firm attitude of the performers, together with its readiness to sacrifice itself, predominance of the impossible, and waiting for beauty. In 1989 we were certainly younger and more naive, we thought that revolutionary art could change the environment it sprung from. But events were seen to dispel our illusions. When we started nobody was being killed because of ideology or religion, and only two or three years later it was almost impossible to count the dead... At that moment, if you do not want to escape or simply forget, you became very harsh and critical to your own ideas and projects... You also grow more selfish and egotistical, thinking more or less this: "OK if I cannot change the world with my art, I can still create, and if the works created are strong enough, they can influence spectators to a certain extent. At the worst, even if nobody cared, they will be mine and I will try to change everything by changing myself..."

Borna Baletić

Interview "You Have to be Registered Somewhere"
Watching is art. Watching is creation. (...) One must know how to enjoy the lofty reality of the stage. Many go to the theatre, and they have no need whatsoever to experience a kind of spiritual insight as, even better, they do not know what they want from their spirit, why they came to the theatre in the first place. **I would really like if people were not bored at my performances**, but I would also like if the things they saw meant something to them.

Beno Jelčić

Interview "Observations of Aesthetism"
The quantity of the true - I prefer the term authentic - is crucial in the communication with the audience... **the division between per-**

formers and audience cannot be removed physically, but on an interior, intuitive level. Every person in the audience, every actor we work with is an individual, a distinct personality. Although the spectator does not speak, he can communicate with the actor if he recognises his individuality. People on stage and those in the audience carry around whole interior worlds. We try to remind them of those worlds in a way. Everyday life is just space they are set into.

SCHMRTZ THEATRE

Jovana Sigla's text "Looking back on Chaoi or the Phenomenon (U)recognised as the Schmrzt Theatre", *Frakcija 3*

Regardless of the countless critical objections one could paste onto their improvised performances, the Schmrzt Theatre consciously carries out the execution of theatre, and seen from that standpoint of raised consciousness becomes not only an ugly, but also interesting phenomenon. Aberration from the artistic attribution is made by conceptually imbued performances which aim at clashing with the concepts. An open call to detachment from the structural and formal levels of performing is, in this case, the organised call to anarchy.

SCHMRTZ THEATRE

from the Schmrzt Theatre Manifesto, *Frakcija 5*, June 1997

"In this century we are being educated for the next one. Even the oldest of us (from the Schmrzt) will not reach their full artistic potential in this century, i.e. achieve something big enough and absolutely relevant that would be worth overwriting at the beginning of the next age. On the other hand, we are too old to be those who will overthrow it. In the future, we will have to conform to

the culture of the 21st century, but we certainly shall not be the ones to start it. We are trying to be a relevant phenomenon: being squeezed between Fabre and Petitjeu, between seventeen and twenty-one, between 1995 and 1999, we have a very limited sphere of action, and a very limited audience. It is that very limitedness that we try to thematise. Pregnant women in Žrnica Šamjor might even believe in the slogans about "dancing their feelings" and the like, but those who are to be born tomorrow will necessarily live by the cultural code that will exclude dance, and perhaps even feelings. We are afraid of those children.

Ivica Boban

interview "Theatre is the Place of Confessions"

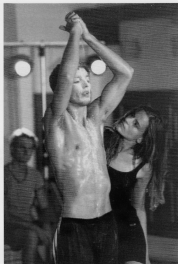
In that war period I completely gave up my work in theatre, because my conscience made me devote all my energies, knowledge and time to those who needed help most, and try to ease their sufferings by my humble activity and do everything in my power to stop the war, destruction, and sufferings. I was disillusioned and disgusted at all politics. In that sense, I see my performances as the antipolitical theatre, theatre against any kind of politics.

One of the strongest and most beautiful life and theatre experiences at the time, the one that restored my energies and my last faith in the sense of theatre, was my theatre-therapeutical work on the performance-fairy tale with children from Vukovar.

Rene Medvešek

Ivica Bušon's text "Dr Medvešek"

To Medvešek, the production of his performances is the production of health. Deleuze's teacher Spinoza calls this a little health. It emerges from everything the author has seen, heard, and experienced in his relationship with people or objects. Just like a sick child. The little health occupies the place once occupied by catharsis. [...] In Ruckert also the happy end has a liberating, therapeutic function. The tramps preparing the performance on the junkyard represent both the artistic attitude and the ethics of the director completely devoted to the moment, to the tragic, to the little and helpless.



Rene Medvešek

interview "Winking of the Eye"

What appeals to me in the theatre are the performances to which I can invite my father and my son alike. I like it when the theatre enables communication where it is clogged in life, because of the generation, conceptual or other prejudices. Instead of gathering at its performances only the select audience of connoisseurs and partisans. If I could conceive of the theatre as having a mission, then I would prefer it to resemble a church than a sect - to address everybody, offering at the same time as many layers of meaning as possible. After all, the idea of the theatre is in a way to make us become like children and engage in a play collectively for an hour or two, and to remind us that what you and I are talking about is but relative and ephemeral. But that our imagination is omnipotent and our spirit indestructible. Fuck, only the future is missing. This might be the end, huh?

Montažstroj

Fragile Exercises



Schmrzt Theatre

Translated by Lada Dowdowlosky

Edited by Marin Radošević, a critic and contributing editor of *Frakcija*

AKADEMIJA DRAMSKIH UMJETNOSTI ACADEMY OF DRAMA ART

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Academy of Drama Art at the University of Zagreb is the only institution for theatre and film art education in Croatia. During a four-year programme the students are being educated at Academy's several Departments, such as Acting, Theatre Directing, Dramaturgy, Film Directing, Editing, Cinematography.

ART KADROVNICA LAZARETI ART WORKSHOP LAZARETI (AWL)

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The Art Workshop Lazareti (AWL), an independent and non-profit association, was founded in 1988 on the initiative of several young intellectuals and artists. In the line of aggressive expansion of the populist kitsch culture, this project aimed to provide an alternative which would articulate cultural needs of young people and help them to actively take part in its programmes, encouraging thus their creativity and independence. The AWL programme tends to promote the right to cultural diversity within the framework of social equality, in a multicultural way and through the multimedia forms.

ATTACK

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Autonomous Culture Factory

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The Autonomous Culture Factory is an "initiative that gathers in a physical space a variety of alternative concerns." On the above address, an infoshop, a theatre performances, workshops, exhibitions, video projections, and concerts premises have recently been established. So far the most ambitious ATTACK project has been FAET, Festival of Alternative Theatre Expression.

CENTAR ZA DRAMSKU UMJETNOST (CDA) CENTRE FOR DRAMA ART (CDA)

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Centre for Drama Art has been founded by the Drama Activity Committee of the Open Society Institute. Its main objective is to provoke new values, as well as formal and production novelties in the sphere of drama art, i.e. theatre and film. CDA is an association that provides financial aid for various projects within its sphere, but also intending to promote forms of drama (theatre, film) culture different from those advocated by the state cultural institutions in Croatia. One of the Centre's projects (together with the Academy for Drama Art) is the magazine for performing arts, *Fioleja*.

CULTURELINK / IMD

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Culturelink is a Network of Networks for Research and Cooperation in Cultural Development and was established by the UNESCO and the Council of Europe in 1989. IMD/Institute for International Relations/ is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization engaged in the interdisciplinary study and research on developmental processes, international relations and cooperation. Aims of the Network are to strengthen communication among its members, to collect, process and disseminate information on culture and cultural joint research projects and cultural cooperation. Main activities of the Network are research, development of the Cultural Development Data Bank, cultural consulting and information services and publication of the Bulletin Culturelink.

EUROROCK

Festival novog jezika
Festival of the New Theatre

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HOPP-MANIZ

Hrvatski institut za pokret i ples
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HOPP-MANIZ provides information flow, conducts research, initiates debate, encourages reflection and supports professional development in relation to the needs of those working in the contemporary dance, movement theatre, mime and other performing arts (excluding music) in and outside of Croatia. To accomplish these goals the Institute organizes debates, conferences, workshops, seminars, lectures, publishes a newsletter, stimulates international contacts through festival activities and carries out applied research.

TIJEDAN SUVRREMNOG PLESA DANCE WEEK FESTIVAL

HOPP-MANIZ also organizes the renowned DANCE WEEK FESTIVAL in Zagreb, which, for the last 15 years, has been presenting most interesting recent movements in contemporary dance, movement theatre, mime and other performing arts.

Info: HOPP-MANIZ and KIC
Festival Art Manager: Milna Žagar

KULTURNO INFORMATIVNI CENTAR (KIC) CENTRE FOR CULTURAL INFORMATION

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**HRVATSKA GLAZBENA MLADIĆ
CROATIAN MUSICAL YOUTH**

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A cultural and educational association whose work is based on the education programmes for pre-school and school children in the field of classical music, organises seminars, workshops, courses and concerts, and also promotes young musicians. The most attractive part of the CMY's activities has for forty years been held in the International Culture Centre in Gradjevan.

**HRVATSKI CENTAR ASSITEJ - UNISCO
CROATIAN CENTRE ASSITEJ - UNISCO**

Association Internationale du theatre pour l'enfance et la jeunesse
International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People

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The Croatian centre ASSITEJ together with the Zagreb Theatre Mala Scena (Small Stage) organises the festival of theatre for the young ORBIT - MILK-ROCK.

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CROATIAN P.E.N. CENTRE**

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10 000 ZAGREB, CROATIA
tel: +385 1 481 69 31
fax: +385 1 481 69 56
President: Slobodan Prosenjak

**HRVATSKI CENTAR UNIMA
CROATIAN CENTRE UNIMA**
Union Internationale de la marionnette
International Puppeteers Union

10018 ZAGREB, CROATIA, pp 499
Zagreb Puppet Theatre
Trg Kralja Tomislava 39
tel: +385 1 432 063
fax: +385 1 431 858
President: Željko Festinić

**HRVATSKI CENTAR ZA DRAMSKO OBGO-
TBU
CROATIAN CENTRE FOR DRAMA EDUCATION
"DOKA"**

Petrinec 48a
10 000 ZAGREB, CROATIA
tel: +385 1 463 5503
President: Vlado Krušić

**IMAGINARNA AKADEMIJA GRIJČAN
IMAGINARY ACADEMY GRIJČAN**

Info: see under Centre for Drama Art
July/August/September:
Gričkan-Gričkanina
Knežica 8 / Vukova ulica 9
tel: 052/776 312, 776 109
e-mail:
imaginarna-akademija@vod.tel.hr
www.imaginaryacademy.com

The Imaginary Academy is today a joint project of the Centre for Drama Art (Zagreb), the Dile State University (Athena), the Academy for Drama Art, and the Academy of Music at the University of Zagreb. It began work in 1995 as the Film Summer School in Gričkan, when the project of an atypical art school that would take care of the development of the spheres of activity which are of special interest in the field of drama art today was initiated. To teach at the Academy, that now has a graduate school status mostly, professors come from Croatia, Western, Middle and Eastern Europe, and the USA. In the summer of this year, for instance, the central theme in the drama department was site-specific theatre, while in the film department it was screenplay, production, and documentaries, and the multimedia, and in the music department composing.

**INSTITUT OTVORNO DRUŠTVO
HRVATSKA
INSTITUTE OPEN SOCIETY
CROATIA**

Helinskega 21
10 008 ZAGREB, CROATIA
tel: +385 1 45 55 880
45 55 681
45 55 682
fax: +385 1 41 74 76
e-mail: sormi_zg@osomzg.drn.apc.org

**INSTITUT ZA SUVREMENO UMJETNOST
INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
(SCA)**

Bešlićeva 20
10 008 ZAGREB, CROATIA
tel: +385 1 429 081
tel/fax: +385 1 432 780

SCA is an independent organisation whose main objective is to promote Croatian art at home and abroad. The Institute's principal activities are annual exhibitions and gathering data on contemporary Croatian art. As a part of the SCA Network that includes all Soros centres for contemporary art in the countries of Middle and Eastern Europe, the Institute also co-ordinates programmes and exchanges exhibitions.

**MINISTARSTVO KULTURE REPUBLIKE
HRVATSKA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC
OF CROATIA**

Trg Buzice 6
10 000 ZAGREB, CROATIA
tel: +385 1 456 90 00
fax: +385 1 451 93 18

**MOTIV - PULA
Medunarodni kazališni festival mladih
International Theatre Festival of the Youth**

The Istrian National Theatre, Pula
Matka Laginja 5
52 000 PULA, CROATIA
tel: +385 52 212 627
fax: +385 52 214 383
Manager: Borka Lulić

In its three years of existence, the ITFY has become a member of the important European networks for theatre co-operation and brought to Pula a number of the world's most renowned educators. ITFY is the only workshop festival in Croatia and is specific because of its role in the quite unknown area of creative educational encounters between various spheres of theatre activity.

**MUZIČKI BEHNALE ZAGREB
MUSIC BIENNALE ZAGREB**

Medunarodni festival savremene glazbe
International Festival of Contemporary Music

Organised by the Croatian Composers Association
Bešlićeva 9
10 000 ZAGREB, CROATIA
tel: +385 1 423 483
fax: +385 1 422 850

**PIF - PUPTEATRA INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVALO**

Medunarodni festival kazališna lutka
International Festival of the Puppet Theatre

International Centre for Culture Services
Božidara Magovca bb
10 000 ZAGREB, CROATIA
tel: +385 1 680 16 25
fax: +385 1 680 30 39
Festival Art Manager: Ljiljana Kraljin

**PUP
Medunarodni kazališni festival
International Puppet Festival**

Sergijevaca 32
52 100 PULA, CROATIA
tel/fax: +385 52 22 883
Manager: Borka Lulić

**ZADAR ŠKOLA
ZADAR OF DREAMS**

Festival modernog teatra
Modern Theatre Festival

Croatian Theatre House Zadar
Šetka Ulica 8
23 000 ZADAR, CROATIA
tel: +385 23 324 588
tel/fax: +385 1 334 598
director: Kristijan Pavić



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PART 3//OCT 98



INTERCULT

LANDSCAPE

STOCKHOLM 8-25 OCT





INTERCULT

Intercult is an independent production unit for performing arts founded in 1991 in Stockholm, Sweden. We initiate and realize projects that cross borders – geographic, ethnic and mental.

The world changes. Economic and political integration increases – so called "globalization". At the same time, growing numbers of citizens are left out of the exchange. The gap between the countries of the Northern hemisphere and those in the South grows wider. Many immigrants lack opportunities and influence in their adopted countries. "Fortress Europe" is no longer a dark fantasy but a bleak reality. But underneath this dark surface, a dynamic potential: the creative vision latent in mixed societies.

Intercult creates and supports artistic work which builds bridges, however fragile, between peoples, nations and continents.

INTERNATIONAL GUEST PERFORMANCES AND CO-PRODUCTIONS

We arrange tours, in Sweden and other Nordic countries, for artists from all over the world. We initiate international co-productions. We design festivals and other events.

Theatre Gerdziowiec – Poland (1992)
Re-Orient Festival – Stockholm (1993, 1994)
SARAJEVO – co-production – ex-Yugoslavia (1993)
Odin Theatre – Denmark (1990, 1995)
Kerns Theater Philipe – Macedonia (1994)
Racoonika – co-production – Macedonia (1994)
Theater an der Ruhr – Germany (1996)
Re-Map – co-production with Copenhagen '96 (1996)
Theater Royal Stratford East – England (1997)
Ravenna Teatro – Italy/Senegal (1997)

Language X – co-production with Stockholm '98 (1998)

NETWORKING

We participate in the development of international, national and local networks. We organize seminars and symposiums on platforms for strategic planning and action.

The Polish-Swedish Theatre Exchange (1991–92)
Informal European Theatre Meeting – IETM (since 1991)
Swedish Theatre Union (since 1991)
The Multicultural Network – Sweden (since 1996)
The European Theatre Exchange – ETX (since 1996)

The Saw Theatre, Hissak-Standart (1998)
Forum för världskultur (1998)

PERFORMANCES AND PROJECTS

We produce intercultural performances and offer production support to work developed by immigrant artists in Sweden.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH

We experiment with approaches to increase cultural democracy and inclusion. We organize seminars and workshops. We work to develop new and diverse audiences for artistic events.

STAFF

Artistic Director: Chris Torch
Producer: Mia Bahr
Audience Development and Networking: Rasi Sukhi
Technical Director: Torben Grut
Administrators: Emel Elendic
Production Assistant: Jolene Nordström
Ticket Sales: Ann-Charlotte Hedegård

ADDRESS

Intercult
Myrorggatan 15, 11622 Stockholm, Sweden
tel +46 8 644 10 21, fax +46 8 644 96 76
e-mail info@intercult.se
homepage www.intercult.se

EUROPE TREMBLES. BORDERS CRUMBLE. CRACKS IN THE TRIBAL MASK.
WOUNDED LANDSCAPES. BROKEN DREAMS. NEW VISIONS.

LANDSCAPE X

X AS NO LONGER. X AS THE UNKNOWN FACTOR. X AS A CROSSROADS.
A TRILOGY ABOUT ART IN A TIME OF TRANSITION.

part 1//re-mapping 29/5-7/6

The Center for Cultural De-contamination

During ten intensive days, LANDSCAPE X opened with a myriad of performances together with more than 20 Yugoslavian artists. The epicenter for most of the events was at the former National Archives Building on Riddarholmen.

- The Process (based on Franz Kafka) directed by Senja Vukčević
- Listen, Little Man (based on Wilhelm Reich) directed by Ana Miljarić
- installations by SKART, a group of visual and graphic action artists
- installations by Branko Pavić
- Alzheimer's Symphony directed by Senja Vukčević

The Art of Resistance, the Resistance of Art

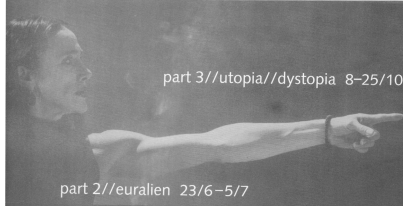
An evening focusing on cultural questions related to the conflicts in Kosovo, with the participation of: Shkëlzen Malaj, Alisa Malaj, Hamdi Abazi, Ismail Imeri, Jens Gtof Lashlein, Jesper Lindau and others.

Theatre OSMEGO DNIA

The legendary Polish theatre presented the World Premiere of their latest work "The Summit" on Stortorget in the Old City of Stockholm.
2 performances.



LANDSCAPE X: SENJA VUKČEVIĆ



part 3//utopia//dystopia 8-25/10

part 2//euralien 23/6-5/7

An international co-production with directors, choreographers, installation artists, actors, dancers, musicians and playwrights from 13 countries in the Balkans and the Baltic region. Each chosen artistic director received a text and a room in the former National Archives Building, chose collaborating artists and created a short performance on the themes of "homelessness" and "alienation".

A labyrinth for 300 spectators, beginning and ending at a bus station on the backyard of the Embassy of the Invisible Republic of Euralien. 12 performances.

Conceived by:
Goran Stefanovski and Chris Torch
Written by:
Goran Stefanovski (Macedonia)
Artistic Co-ordination:
Chris Torch (Sweden)
Set and Site Design:
Sören Brunus (Sweden)
Production Manager:
Edward Buřliak Brönberg (Sweden)

Artistic Directors

Peeter Jalakas and Ervin Öunapuu, Estonia, Reginas and Patenis Kolkovs, Latvia, Gintaras Varnas, Lithuania, Piotr Cieplak, Poland, Ivan Pasteliev, Bulgaria, Alexander Marlov, Bulgaria, Sato Milenkovski, Macedonia, Oritoro Kasapi, Macedonia, Matjaz Faric, Slovenia, Bibi Andersson, Sweden, Alexander Nordström, Russia/ Sweden

"A Cultural Capital event
truly worth its name!"

Expressen (Stockholm)

"Political theatre for
the century of the
postleus..."

Svenska Dagbladet (Stockholm)

"Violence bordering on
tenderness..."

Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm)

ADVISORY COUNCILS

Intercult had the privilege of support and advice from two groups of people during the preparation of the project.

IN SWEDEN

Görel Nagler, The Swedish Helsinki Committee
Mikael Brannes, Riksteatern
Tanya Pelousa, International IDEA
Agnete Pejtel, writer
Tibor Hlavni, ambassador, Republic of Macedonia
Monica Nagler, Swedish PEN Club
Suzanne Odén, Unga klass

INTERNATIONAL

Dragan Kljak, Theater Institut Nederland
Helmut Schäfer, Theater an der Ruhr, Germany
Goran Stefanovski, playwright, Macedonia
Borka Pavlovic, Center for Cultural De-contamination, Serbia
Irena Viskic, Open Society Fund, Lithuania
Krzysztof Cybulski, Borderland Foundation, Poland

LANDSCAPE X

Concept and production: Intercult in collaboration with Stockholm - Cultural Capital of Europe 1998
Graphic Design: Nina Ullmar

PARTNERS

Open Society Fund - Lithuania, Cankarjev Dom - Slovenia, The New Theatre Institute - Latvia, Fund for the Arts - Bulgaria, The Swedish Helsinki Committee, The Swedish PEN Club, Kaunas Theatre - Italy, Theater an der Ruhr - Germany, The Center for Cultural De-contamination - Serbia

Skeppsholmskyrkan

The beautiful church on Skeppsholmen was built between 1824 and 1842. It functioned throughout most of its history as a place of worship for the Swedish Navy, which had a base on the island until well into the 1960's.

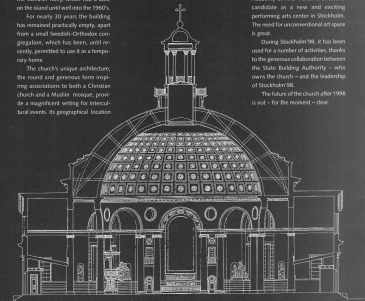
For nearly 30 years the building has remained practically empty, apart from a small Swedish-Orthodox congregation, which has been, until recently, permitted to use it as a temporary home.

The church's unique architecture, the round and generous form inspiring associations to both a Christian church and a Muslim mosque, provide a magnificent setting for intercultural events. Its geographical location

in the very center of Stockholm, surrounded by water and neighboring both the new Museum of Modern Art, the East Asian Museum and the Royal Academy of Art, makes it a natural candidate as a new and exciting performing arts center in Stockholm. The need for unconventional art space is great.

During Stockholm 98, it has been used for a number of activities, thanks to the generous collaboration between the State Building Authority – who owns the church – and the leadership of Stockholm 98.

The future of the church after 1998 is not – for the moment – clear.



Center for Theatre Practices GARZIEN



MARJANA SADOVNIKA in "Mikromagicheskiy" (2012) - Krasnodar Theatre

CE "Theatre as a life project"



TOMASZ KODOWICZ, MARLUSZ GOŁAJ, JANUSZ NADZIEJA (FROM JÓHANNA HEDBERG)

...the passion and visceral intensity of this young troupe are invigoratingly inescapable...

The Bodin Group (USA)

"As vital as the dervish dance, as captivating as a folksong sung full volume with innumerable harmonies, such is the theatre of GARDZIENCE...like an eruptive piece of life, erotic, historical, traditional - on the edge of an abyss."

Dagmar Nybeler (Stockholm, Sweden)

"The actors move like a collective human plane, firing the performance space with the thrum and throb of liturgical song..."

Glasgow Herald (Scotland)

"Such splendid irony, such perfect theatrical work. It's not possible to describe...I must be seen, it must be experienced."

Dziennik Wschodu (Poland)

My first meeting with GARDZIENCE and artistic director Włodzimierz Stasiński was complex, somewhat painful. We presented the company in Stockholm in 1982, part of the Scenarium Festival. Their perfectionism and profound commitment astounded our audiences. They also exhausted our technical staff and challenged our organisation to the limits.

First in 1985, when they returned by popular demand for the second Scenarium, did I learn to appreciate the basic premise: theatre as a life project. A marathon experience, two short performances and a wild, intense gathering. Designing and re-creating community.

We collaborated 1992 on a very special project. A tour in Sweden (Umeå, Sundsvall, Stockholm, Gävle) was initiated with two weeks on Gotland, a beautiful island in the Baltic Sea. GARDZIENCE's choice of performance spaces were church ruins from the Middle Ages and secret corners of the landscape. Searching for the natural environment for the theatre. Gerks lovi. Acoustics, light, architecture, surroundings, all interwoven. Culture and Ecology. The Body and the Context. Since then I have visited their home base in the peasant village of Gardzienice. Each time I return, something has changed. A new corner of their micro-cosmos explored and transformed.

And always new colleagues, young people, all around them. The core members (Stasiński, Tomasz Rodowicz, Marłusz Gołaj) invest enormous effort to open communication with emerging theatre artists. They give and they take - an exchange of blood, sweat and courage. The latest work - "Metamorphosis" - is filled with vitality and precision, erudition and humour possible because of the mixed ensemble.

As a lifeline in the theatre, focus a moment on GARDZIENCE. Their stubborn survival under the rigid ceiling of communism, later in a period of struggle and now transition, the company has become an essential element of Polish cultural history.

They are also map-readers, navigators of this voyage on earth called life. They travel incessantly, draw a line of energy between the local (their home village) and the spectral (hidden cultures throughout the world).

It is an honour to present this company in Stockholm as part of LANDSCAPE X, at a time in European history when serious questions about materialism are again being raised. GARDZIENCE represents personal and collective integrity mixed with skill and deep research - values essential to our cultural development.

Chris Toohy, september 1990

The company

The experimental theatre company Gardzienice was established in 1977 by Włodzimierz Staniewski. Based in the village of Gardzienice, near Lublin in eastern Poland, the company now has over a dozen members.

In their work they seek to rescue what remains of indigenous culture in the ethnically and religiously diverse territories of eastern and south-eastern Poland, where Polish culture intermingled with Jewish, Ukrainian and Belarusian expressions and influenced by Byzantine culture and Gypsy nomads.

The company is not only renowned for its virtuoso performances but also for its rugged field work in isolated rural areas of the world. During expeditions, the company explores communities with indigenous songs, myths, rituals and oral history that urban civilization is in the process of destroying. They do not simply record this folk art, they share it.

The company searches for vital dramatic forms in Native Culture as a main source of inspiration for its stage language.

Native culture teaches above all the honesty of work and professionalism. Because the "duty" in Native Culture (today we call it a "profession") humbling else but the necessity forced upon it by destiny: one has to fulfil this to the very end, the essentials of life.

THE VILLAGE OF GARDZIENICE

The surroundings of Gardzienice were well known many centuries ago: important merchant routes from the East to the West and from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea used to pass in the region. Then, for many years, Gardzienice was nothing but a forgotten and desolate place.

The Center for Theatre Practices GARDZIENICE is led by a deep conviction that "culture is born from an image of one's own earth, from an image of one's own garden, from a way of entering one's presence into space".

For 20 years, the company has been realizing its artistic and environmental endeavors in this village. The fact that the name of the village has been widespread by the Center in

above: "AFROKUM", below: "CARMINA BURANA" music, center: left





WŁODZIMIERZ STANIEWSKI

many countries allows that not only does the company identify with the village but also that the villagers identify with the Center. It is an object of local pride and the fame of the theatre makes local initiatives more powerful and outspoken. The presence of the theatre in the village is less symbiotic than mutually inspiring.

The aim of initiating actions for the good of the local community is to create an environment of high ecological values through the restoration of beauty and harmony in the devastated surroundings. The company believes that the cultivation of cultural, theatrical and musical practices rather than the exclusive hope for material benefits will become a motivation for social transformations in the village. Based on the capital of work and experience, Gardzienice aims at

creating a culture center in the village as a small reminder of the Republic of Many Cultures. Presently, the theatre uses The Palace, The Chapel, The Backhouse and The Park. The Mill burnt to the ground in 1994 while under renovation. The Distillery and the Governor's House are next for reconstruction. Members of the company have homes in the village as well.

METAMORPHOSIS

director: Włodzisław Staniewski

actors: Mariusz Gola, Tomasz Radowski, Marlene Sadowska, Marcin Mrowca, Elżbieta Rojek, Joanna Holcgraeb, Karol Pomorski, Beata Farkas, Martti Eerola-Mäkelä

music: Maciej Rychły
light technician: Krzysztof Piekarczyk

Our warm appreciation to The Polish Ministry of Art and Culture for their support in bringing the company to LANDSCAPE X – Stockholm 98.

PRODUCTIONS

Gargantua and Pantagruel – based on François Rabelais (1979)
Gula – based on Adam Mickiewicz's "Forefathers' Eve" (1981)
Awolium – based on "The Life of Aschepot Amelium" (1983)
Carmine Rustica – based on medieval poetry and "Festas e lude" (1991)
Metamorphosis – based on Apollinaire's "Metamorphosis in the Golden Age" (1993)

FESTIVALS

International Theatre Festival – Santarcangelo, Italy (1979 and 1987)
Solestommar – Stockholm, Sweden (1982 and 1985)
Holland Festival (1984)
Theatre of Nations – Baltimore, USA (1986)
New York International Arts Festival – USA (1988)
Olympic Arts Festival – Seoul, South Korea (1988)
Tops Festival – Japan
San Paulo Festival – Brazil

EXPEDITIONS

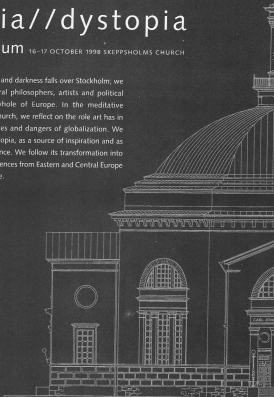
Londre (France), Toscana/Emilia Romagna/Ugento (Italy), Szwecja (Sweden), Monrovia (Finland), Swiss Alps, Lofoten (Sweden), Gotland (Sweden), Carpathian Mountains (Ukraine), Egypt ... and others...

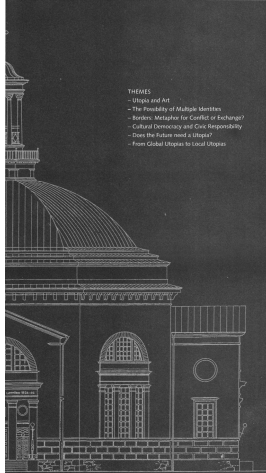
BROKEN DREAMS. NEW VISIONS.

utopia//dystopia

a symposium 16-17 OCTOBER 1998 SKEPPSHOLMS CHURCH

As winter approaches and darkness falls over Stockholm, we bring together cultural philosophers, artists and political thinkers from the whole of Europe. In the meditative environment of the church, we reflect on the role art has in meeting the challenges and dangers of globalization. We explore the idea of Utopia, as a source of inspiration and as an excuse for intolerance. We follow its transformation into Dystopia, using experiences from Eastern and Central Europe as a point of departure.





THEMES

- Utopia and Art
- The Possibility of Multiple Identities
- Borders: Metaphor for Conflict or Exchange?
- Cultural Democracy and Civic Responsibility
- Does the Future need a Utopia?
- From Global Utopias to Local Utopias

INVITED INTERNATIONAL GUEST SPEAKERS

Eugenio Barba, artistic director –
Göln Teatret, Denmark
Dragan Klaić, director – Theater
Instituut Nederland, The Netherlands
Jadith Mallea, artistic director –
The Living Theatre, USA/Italy
Marco Martinelli, artistic director –
Ravenna Teatro, Italy
Goran Stelarcovski, playwright and
professor, Macedonia
Włodzisław Stanisławski, artistic
director – Theatre Gardzienice,
Poland
Magda Carneci, poet and professor
of literature, Romania
Alen Debeljak, poet and sociologist,
Slovenia
Malgorzata Delewska, theatre
critic and dramaturg, Poland
Krzysztof Czyżewski, director –
The Borderland Foundation, Poland
Anton Adassinski, artistic director –
Theatre Derivo, Russia/Germany
Borka Pavicevic, director – Center
for Cultural De-contamination, Serbia

The Radio Dialogues presented
during the Symposium are produced
in a generous collaboration with
"TENDRNS", an important current
affairs program at The Swedish
Radio/PT.

Artistic advisor – Helmut Schäfer,
Theater an der Ruhr, Germany

Designed in collaboration with
Monica Nagler, president – Swedish
PEN Club

RUSSIA/GERMANY

theatre DEREVO

Nomads and anti-clowns

St. Petersburg, a.k.a. Leningrad. Winter 1997. I am there to see a company called DEREVO. Rumors had reached me: a group of "anti-clowns" who balancing on a tightrope between Russian circus art and post-modern dance theatre.

A description which turned out to be true – except for the word "post-modern". These artists believe too much in communication to fall into a circle of 90's theatrical cynicism. They talk about love, tears, hope and emptiness as if it really meant something, as if art could really capture beauty, if only for a moment.

Edinburgh. Fringe Festival. August 1998. Over two thousand companies vying for attention, all dreaming of the big break, a tour invitation or a less. DEREVO won the Total Theatre Award here last year for the dark and intimate vision in "Red Zone". This year they sell out at the Fringe's largest venue with the more tragicomic "Once...", for which they are awarded the coveted Herald Angel Award and The Fringe First.

DEREVO doesn't have to struggle for attention. Their shaved heads and a strong, natural presence on the stage demand our focus. And when we enter their world, we do it in a

child-like way – we open, we follow. Because of this natural presence, they make impact without forcing themselves on you.

Anton Adasinski is a brilliant "anti-clown", closely followed by his core collaborators on stage Elena Iarovaia and Tatiana Khabarova. He is also a fountain of ideas, projects and plans: a Renaissance man of the theatre. He is the founder and one of the leaders of the company. But DEREVO is more than an ensemble built around the vision of one man. They are a family of nomads and a way of life. For now, they seem to have found their home in Dresden in eastern Germany, where they plan to develop their School on Wheels and a home base for their production work.

This Russian-German company comes to Stockholm as the final event of LANDSCAPE X because they can make us laugh. Laughter in the church, a holy act if any act is holy. They can make us laugh about ourselves, our shortcomings and our hopeless dreams. That might just be the right way to round off the whole Stockholm experience 1998... laughing through our tears.

Chris Torch, september 1998



"...exquisitely bitter-sweet slowing from the very heart of our own romantic fantasies and yearnings ... Bravo Derveo for reminding us that it is better in this life to be heart-broken than heartless."

The Herald (Scotland)

"It's clever. It's kitsch. Go use it. At least once."

The Independent (England)

"...an endearing, artful fairy tale about the storms that toss the human heart and the triumph of love."

The Canadian (England)





DEREVO & ANTON

The group DEREVO was founded by Anton Adassiński in 1988, in Leningrad/St. Petersburg. In 1990, for artistic reasons, the group began its voyage through Europe in search of a home: Prague, Amsterdam, Florence. It functions now as a theatre studio, with a home base in Dresden, Germany.

I. MANIFESTO '88

- The members of the group deliberately avoid words like: theatre, acting, actor.
- The members of DEREVO believe that men should keep their heads down.
- They believe as well in the importance of:
 - a new-born child's cry
 - the beginning of movement
 - the beginning of sound
 - immobility
 - dreams
 - sleepwalkers balance

We believe:

... that man lives in a state of constant war with the world and every minute he loses this war; that he lives for a short time and in anger; and that there are people who can hear the harmony of the world but that their voices are quiet.

...that we are not responsible for anything but there is something that compels us to be together.

... that ancient books and friendship with animals are important; that the horizon is always under your feet and that the sky begins straight from the earth.

II. Fragments of a conversation with Anton Adassiński

UNIMPORTANT

Unimportant is religion, politics. You don't have to deal with this to make theatre. You have to be free from this. From the stereotype of man's thinking, that this is wrong and this is right, that this man is bad and that one is good. Maybe you find traces of anarchism in what I'm saying but if we know why we reject this system of thinking, then there is meaning in our work.

IMPORTANT

We may be responsible only for our work, for the quality of it. And quality cannot exist without being good. Now I will say something against myself: what about the quality of a weapon? First class quality: technical equipment, war design, Krupp's factories, grand quality - but for whom and for what does it work? To every question you may add a counter question. And here lies the problem. Maybe what's important is to think about it; maybe to be under the influence of these thoughts will be enough...

ABOUT EXERCISES

You open a paper and read: "Africa: 2000 people died in Botswana". But it is very far away, it is Africa. 2000 people. You see a field covered with people who died for nothing, who died of hunger. Is it a tragedy for you, this fragment in the newspaper? Or is the death of a familiar person who lived around the corner a tragedy for you? It is a spiritual exercise: to suffer the same because of one as well as the other. It is one of the simple exercises.

ABOUT LAZINESS IN THE THEATRE

There is always laziness. Yours as well as ours.

ABOUT LUGGAGE WHICH DOES NOT GROW

About luggage which does not grow. Don't ask the artists how they create tears, how they do it. Everyone has his own secret. And everyone has his private life. Our conversations in the company are dull, simple, deliberately primitive, just to not get into anything. Because each one of us has his own luggage filled with experiences, books, music, dreams. This luggage is limited, it gets smaller quicker than it grows, especially at a certain age. The using up of this luggage may be very quick, very simple and very dangerous. Later none of us can have anymore freshness.

ABOUT TALENT

Talent – it is a good beginning. You see a man on stage and for three seconds, he's brilliant and then for the next five minutes, he does rubbish. If he had such three seconds it means he can work like this for three hours. This in turn means he has to be taught how to work. Talent is just an advance to let the work begin.

ABOUT SPIRITUAL MASTERY

A soul is an instrument that you cannot make bigger or smaller. You cannot choose any kind of exercise for the spiritual work of the actor. A man is on stage, you can see everything in his eyes. He may make mistakes, may not have straight legs, may miss a sound or a light cue but in his eyes you will see everything he wants to say and the etude reaches you as intended, as part of his spiritual creation.

ABOUT THE FINAL EFFECT

The result must be humane. When you leave a performance depressed and all you want to do is drink because the performers have taken everything from you – then what is it for? You are innocent. You paid money and still they take everything from you. But on the other hand there are days when there is no feeling of loss, there is no laughter, you could hang yourself. There are days like that. But you still have to work.

ONCE...

created & directed by Anton Adasewski and DEEVED

performers: Arlen Adasewski, Elvira Iervinsk, Tatiana Khabarova, Hito Dörrie, Adam Leszczko

light design: Valeri Gubokov
set design: Maxim Isakov
manager: Christa Mueller

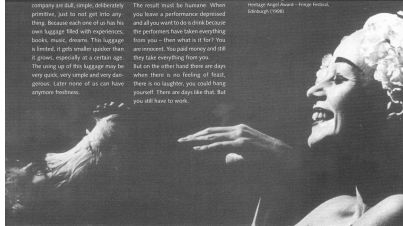
PRODUCTIONS IN REPERTORY, 1997-98
The Rider, Once..., South/Border

FESTIVALS

Intercity Festival – Florence, Italy (1988)
LIFT – London, England (1988)
Sweenscane – Salzburg, Austria (1988)
Jerusalem Festival – Israel (1991)
Divasta Nitro – Slovakia (1992)
Marta Festival – Poznan, Poland (1992)
BITF – Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1993)
Dublin Arts Festival – Ireland (1994)
Festival Mantejeler – France (1995)
Brazil Tour (1996)
Edinburgh Fringe Festival – Scotland (1995, 1998)
LANDSCAPE X – Stockholm, Sweden (1998)
...and many others...

PRIZES

Critics Prize – Best Performance, Festival, Pangeax, France (1992 & 1997)
Grand Prize – BITF, Belgrade (1994)
Critics Prize – Total Theatre Award, Fringe Festival, Edinburgh (1997)
Heistage Angel Award – Fringe Festival, Edinburgh (1998)



LANDSCAPE X

PART 3//OCT 98

A European project like that of the Cultural Capitals should take some time and reflect a little extra on why the issues concerning European culture are in the frontline right now. Is because of the European Union and the concerns regarding cultural cooperation? Is it maybe because of ideas that Europe should stand up and fight for its profile in times when the American influence on the arts is more evident than ever?

No, the answer is rather that European culture needs to fight any sign of superficiality, any belief of superiority and any possible notion that the situation for the arts in Europe would be safe, prosperous and full of hope for the future. The real future for culture in Europe can only be reached through reflexion, dialogue and openness towards new constellations of cultural actions, innovative processes and cooperation concerning production and dissemination of cultural material.

These are some of the reasons why Stockholm – Cultural Capital of Europe 1998 has found it both necessary and inspiring to cooperate with the project LANDSCAPE X and its different sections during 1998. Now it is time for the third part to open. The stage for this is the Skeppsholmskyrkan in Stockholm, a space which is serving as a platform for culture during 1998. A concentrated space located on an island which is part of an archipelago turned towards the eastern parts of Europa, and thus also part of the sea that ties us together with cultures that we now are discovering after many years of silence. I am sure that the cooperation developed through the project LANDSCAPE X will lead to a less divided Europe.



Bozte Syllström
Program Director
Stockholm – Cultural Capital of Europe 1998

Beauty on water. Where stillness and the city meet.



Stop for a moment. Go down to the water's edge – it's never far away. To a place where stillness and the city meet, where tranquillity takes you by the hand, just when you need it most. Here your thoughts can wander free, undisturbed.

Then go back. Back to the pulse, the people and the events. To everything which makes a city what it should be.

Welcome to Stockholm – an oasis of calm, a living multicultural city.



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STIFTELSEN FRAMTIDENS KULTUR

THE CITY OF STOCKHOLM

(Department of Culture and Recreation)

THE COUNTY OF STOCKHOLM

(Department of Culture and Education)

SIDA

KONSTNÄRSNÄMNDEN

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THE POLISH MINISTRY OF ARTS AND CULTURE

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